"The Arts in Nineteenth-Century Portland"
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Thank you, everyone, and thank you Marjorie for that nice introduction. We are here, as you know, to talk about the arts in 19th-century Portland, and that is a lot of ground to cover. This was a time of huge change for this city in all kinds of ways. These were the years when Portland became a center for shipping and trade on the New England coast, and also when it became a cultural center with its own distinct artistic traditions. This is when the concept of what we now think of as "Maine art" evolved, and that evolution happens in really interesting and complex ways, in Portland and beyond. One presentation is not enough, of course, to tell the whole story, so this talk is going to be about hitting some of the big ideas and showing you highlights from some of our local collections.

So the place is Portland, Maine, and the year is 1800. What's happening in this beautiful town that is seated by the sea, as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow would later remember it? (slide) By the turn of the 19th century Portland had established itself as an important shipping port, playing a major role early on in the mast trade, and then participating in the triangle trade, in which raw New England resources like lumber and whale oil were traded for European goods like porcelain and silver, products of the West Indies like sugar and molasses, and yes, human cargo from Africa's west coast. There's no denying that the Triangle Trade played a major role in Portland's increasing good fortunes in the years just after the revolution, but Portland also had direct trade relationships with cities on the other side of the Atlantic. Remember, only a generation earlier the people of New England considered themselves British citizens, and there were still important cultural and familial connections between Britain and its former colonies. With the tensions of the revolution temporarily behind them, the two countries traded freely, and what they traded was not just lumber and earthenware, but also ideas and aesthetics.

(Slide: McLellan House) This talk really isn't about architecture, but still, you can't really begin to talk about the arts in Portland without talking about these impressive new homes, very much based on British models, that began springing up on the peninsula in the post-Revolution years. As Portland men made their fortunes through shipping, they wanted large, comfortable, elegantly appointed homes to provide the right kind of setting for the luxury goods that they brought back with them on their ships. In the year 1800 shipping tycoon Hugh McLellan hired the local housewright John Kimball, Senior, to design and build a home for him on the corner of High and Spring streets in Portland's West End, now part of the Portland Museum of Art. Everything about this house—its clean, simple lines, the portico, the columns, its Palladian window, the Grecian urns on the roof cornice—everything is inspired by the neoclassical style of Robert Adam, who was the leading architect and interior designer in Britain during this same time period. In fact, we know that Kimball was looking at British sources, because some of the design books that he used have survived today in the collections of the Maine Historical Society.

(Slides: McLellan House interiors) Homes like these were not only aesthetic statements in and of themselves, but they also provided, really for the first time in Portland, an appropriate setting for sophisticated social gatherings and for the display of luxury goods and fine arts. Suddenly homes had dining rooms and parlors, rooms that were dedicated specifically for the purpose of

entertaining and that demanded equally elegant furnishings. In the first few years of the 19th century, the fine things that people had in their homes—whether we're talking about paintings, silver, ceramics, or glass—were mostly produced outside the state. Portland's participation in global trade meant that homes here might have fine furniture from England; fabrics from India or China; silver and glass from France, Italy, or Bohemia; or ceramics made overseas expressly for the Western market.

(Slide: export porcelain) What you see here is a Chinese porcelain dinner service in the Portland Museum of Art's collection, and it too features a sort of neoclassical design that says much more about the western market for which it was created than the Chinese artisans who created it. Even when sets like these were not being used, they might very well have been in display in a china cabinet, which was a relatively new thing at the time, both the freestanding kind and the kind that was built right into the architecture of a home. Chinese export porcelain was often designed very specifically for American tastes—you see export porcelain with designs of George Washington's tomb on them, for instance, or Masonic symbols, or American flags and eagles. But some designs for imported tablewares were even more specifically tailored for local markets.

(Slide: Liverpool pitcher) This earthenware pitcher featuring an image of Portland's brand-new observatory, built in 1807, was actually produced in Liverpool, England, a frequent port of call for Portland-based ships. It's a kind of mutual celebration of that beneficial relationship between the two cities, which would unfortunately be short-lived. 1807 was an important year not just because the Observatory was built, but also because it was the first year of President Thomas Jefferson's unpopular embargo that limited trade to and from American ports. The 1807 Embargo Act was repealed within a couple of years, but it was then followed by the War of 1812, which complicated trade between Britain and the United States for another three years. So it's partly for these reasons that, all up and down the eastern seaboard in the early years of the 19th century, Americans had to find ways to produce for themselves the same kinds of luxury goods that they had previously gotten through imports. This was the start of wide-scale commercial manufacturing and inter-city trade in the United States, and Portland, as a flourishing port city, played an important role.

(Slide: Radford secretary) Fine furniture was one of the first markets to find its niche in Portland. Among the most skilled furniture-makers of the time were the brothers Daniel, Benjamin, and William Radford, whose Portland shop produced elegant wooden furniture that was based on European designs but crafted locally and used a combination of imported and local materials. What you're looking at here is a mahogany secretary that demonstrates the Radford brothers' typically slender and delicate neoclassical designs—you can see how something like this would fit so well into someplace like the McLellan House. The mahogany veneer was imported, but the Radfords and other regional furniture-makers made use of native woods as well. In northern New England, woods like flame birch and tiger maple were often used for the decorative inlay; in fact, identifying these woods is one of the ways that scholars identify furniture from this area. (Slide: lolling chair) This armchair, also by the Radford shop, displays the same kind of understated, neoclassical design, and it's also an example of the new types of furniture that were evolving as Americans, at least the wealthy ones, had more time for leisure activities. The period term for this kind of chair is a "lolling chair," so it was very pointedly meant for *relaxing*. Card tables and tea tables were other kinds of furniture that were new at the time and reflected how America's merchant classes embraced these kinds of social rituals that signified, which broadcast their

refinement. In fact, some scholars refer to the first years of the nineteenth century as the "Age of Refinement."

(Seymour) Another local furniture making firm of this period was the shop of John and Thomas Seymour, a father and son who started their business in Portland and then moved to Boston, where they were hugely successful. Seymour furniture is among the most highly collectible federal furniture in the market today, and the Portland pieces are very rare. This secretary, from the collections of the Winterthur Museum in Delaware, dates right around the time that the firm moved from Portland to Boston, and it has a Maine provenance, so it is an early piece that could very well have been made here in Maine. I think it gives you a sense of the level of craftsmanship that the Seymours were capable of, and that local buyers had come to expect.

(slide: McLellan silver) Silversmiths like Enoch Moulton and Oliver Gerrish, among others, also set up shop in Portland to accommodate the growing demand for tea services, flatware, and candlesticks to furnish Portland's dining rooms and parlors. Moulton, who is responsible for the little shell-topped sugar tongs you see here, had a shop on Fore Street opposite Ingraham's Wharf, where he advertised that he manufactured and sold jewelry as well as silver and pewter ware. Gerrish, who made the spoons, was on Exchange Street, and he identified himself as a jeweler, silversmith, and watchmaker. The reason these things are photographed together, along with this partial tea service from England, is that they all once belonged to Eunice McLellan, a daughter of Hugh McLellan, and were probably part of her wedding silver. While these particular items were most likely never used in the actual McLellan House, they are typical of what you might have seen in Portland's most elegant homes.

(Slide: Adams) Another important early Portland artisan was the stonecutter Bartlett Adams, who ran his shop at Federal and Court Streets from 1800 until his death in 1828. I think it's interesting that in this ad announcing his arrival in Portland he describes himself not just as a stone cutter but as a sculptor, so it seems really very appropriate to think of him as one of Portland's first artists. Today what we know of Adams' work are the gravestones he made primarily for Portland's Eastern Cemetery, and you see a beautiful example here, but this ad demonstrates that he also at least intended to carve hearthstones and mantel pieces for local homes, presumably decorating them with some of these very distinctive motifs that make his work so recognizable today.

But what were you going to hang over that mantelpiece, right? You might think a nice big painting would be the obvious choice, but in fact it was very rare for Portland homes in these early years of the 19th century to have any kind of painting at all. (Slide: Girandole mirror) More likely you'd have used this space for a semi-functional piece, like a clock or a lamp or something like this very understated mirror, which was made by an artisan in Boston but descended in a Portland family. Mirrors were particularly sought-after because of their ability to reflect and multiply light and make a room seem bigger. A convex mirror like this one, with its attached candleholders, could reflect almost all of the room at once while providing its own light source.

You may have detected some very subtle patriotic imagery in this mirror, and this is something that bled over into almost every kind of art in the first years of the United States.
(Slide: General Dearborn) You see it, for instance, in this portrait of Portland's Major General

Henry Dearborn painted by Gilbert Stuart, who was the most famous portraitist in America during the Federal period. Dearborn was a Revolutionary War hero who settled in Maine after the war was over, subsequently became a US Congressman, and also served as a general during the War of 1812, which is the period that this painting dates from. Selecting Stuart to paint his portrait was a sign of General Dearborn's importance on a national scale; Stuart's other clients had included presidents George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. He worked in a very neoclassical style, and he tended to portray the heads of state that he painted as sort of modern-day Roman heroes. It was a useful metaphor for the young American republic, which aspired to achieve a similar ideal of a nation in which politics and good government would coexist with achievements in philosophy, literature, and the arts. Portraits were of course conveyors of legacies in very obvious ways, but through visual details like these they also conveyed ideals and ideologies that were shared beyond the limits of any single family.

Portraiture was by far the most popular form of painting in the young United States; if an early 1800s home had any paintings at all, they were likely to be portraits. While very wealthy people like Dearborn could afford the services of academically trained portrait painters "from away," your average shopkeeper or farmer or clergyman was more likely to hire an itinerant, or traveling, portrait painter, who could make something more simply, more quickly, and at less expense. (slide: Mary McLellan) This portrait of Mary McLellan, the mother of Hugh McLellan, was painted by an artist named John Brewster Jr. as early as 1795. Brewster, who was born in Connecticut, was one of the first generation of itinerant painters to become active in Maine. He was primarily self- taught, rather than trained in an academy or as someone's apprentice, and this was for a couple of different reasons. First, there really weren't a lot of opportunities for academic artistic training in the early American republic—the first art schools wouldn't be founded until well into the 1800s—and second, Brewster's options were further narrowed because he had been born Deaf. This was before American Sign Language and before there was even a single educational institution, in the United States or anywhere, dedicated to the hearing impaired, so in addition to being unable to hear, Brewster also had a very limited ability to speak, read, and write. He probably communicated with his sitters mostly through rudimentary sign language, and he also probably relied heavily upon his brother Royal Brewster, who was a well-respected physician in Buxton, Maine.

(Slide: Prior) William Matthew Prior was another itinerant portraitist who briefly maintained a studio in Portland at this time, and he cleverly offered a range of services to suit any potential customer's budget. Large-scale, fully-realized portraits such as this one of Ann Cascaline Merrill Staples, the daughter of a Portland merchant, could cost as much as $25, while a simpler portrait (Slide) painted, in the artist's terminology, "without shade or shadow" was less than three dollars. Prior's case is a fascinating one because it demonstrates that to be an artist at this time was also to be a businessman. Part of the challenge in encouraging the arts in Portland and the surrounding area was to develop and market a skill that would find a sustained client base, and ideally not just among the very wealthiest citizens, so scaling his prices in this way was Prior's kind of ingenious solution. Prior's case is also interesting because it argues that the so-called "primitive" appearance of some 19th-century portraits, at least in some cases, may be due as much to financial choices as aesthetic ones.

(Slide: Lawson) Prior's body of work is also notable because it includes several portraits of people from New England's free African American community. Those that are known today are

later works painted in Boston, like this really exceptional portrait of Nancy Lawson from 1843, but it's intriguing to think that Prior might have worked with Black clients here in Portland as well. Prior's time in Portland, until about 1827, coincides with the time when Black folks here were making plans to found the Abyssinian Meeting House (slide), still standing today on Newbury Street, as a place where they could worship freely without being segregated into side pews or balconies, and where they could become leaders within their own faith community. Nancy Lawson was, in fact, born and raised in Maine—although Vassalboro, not Portland—and was deeply involved in religious causes both there and in Boston.

(slide) So Portland was becoming a bustling place. After years of debate, Maine had finally separated from Massachusetts to become its own state in 1820, and Portland was its first capital. This watercolor shows Congress street sort of as it must have looked then, with the white state house over here on the far right, and the brick county courthouse just beyond it. We know little about this artist apart from her name, and we don't know the circumstances under which she made this admittedly awkward painting, but what's interesting to me is that clearly, living in Greater Portland in 1832, she had the opportunity to learn not only how to paint in watercolor but also how to use one-point perspective and basic landscape painting techniques. I think of this little female figure in the foreground as a kind of stand-in for the artist: dead center, looking straight into the painting, moving forward. There is a sense that this is her town as much as it is the dapper gentleman's on a horse, or the two fellows ahead of her on the path.

(Slide: Todd) Moving from Congress Street to Middle Street, we arrive at the storefront of James Todd, a frame-maker who is best known today for his mirrors featuring decorative hand-painted panels like the one you see here. The technique was known as *verre eglomise*, or reverse-painting on glass, which is exactly what it sounds like—the artist built up the picture outside-in, starting with the details and moving on to the background, so that when you turned it over and looked at it through its glass support, it would come together and read as a unified image. That's obviously a specialized skill set, so Todd might have contracted the work out to local professionals. (Slide: Codman, Twin Mountain) For instance, the similarity of some of Todd's panels to early work by landscape painter Charles Codman suggests that they may have worked together in the 1820s. This wouldn't be surprising, since Codman was, at the time, sharing a studio with William Matthew Prior, just across the street.

With their gilded frames and decorative details, Todd's mirrors occupy a middle ground between the fine and functional arts. (slide: fireboards) This is also true of a commission that Codman completed for the wealthy landowner James Deering in 1829: a series of painted fireboards for his Portland mansion. Fireboards were used to cover open hearths during the summertime months when they were not in use, and so they were necessary pieces of furniture. But Codman used the opportunity to turn them into fully realized landscape paintings, complete with gold-stenciled faux frames.

By the time he painted these fireboards, Codman had already been in Portland for at least six years, having moved from Boston around 1823. After several years of producing primarily decorative work, which according to his advertisements included clock dials and tea trays, he eventually caught the attention of John Neal, a distinguished citizen of Portland who is frequently cited as America's first art critic and was just an all-around kind of Renaissance man. Neal was impressed with Codman's work, and by his own account he encouraged Codman to give up

decorative painting and focus exclusively on easel paintings and landscapes. (Slide: Wilderness Shore) The paintings that Codman produced never made him a wealthy man, but they did find a market and they did earn him fame and appreciation in Portland. Some of Codman's paintings, like the one you see here, also traveled outside of Maine to be shown in exhibitions at places like the Boston Athenaeum and at the National Academy of Design in New York.

(Slide: Sully and banner) Similarly, notable works of art produced by artists outside of Maine also traveled here to Portland, which gave both the general public and local artists the chance to see and learn from the work of academically trained masters. Thomas Sully's massive history painting, *The Passage of the Delaware*, which is now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, was exhibited at Portland's Union Hall in 1823. This kind of limited-engagement presentation of a single painting really was like a theater opening; it created a lot of buzz among the people who lived in Portland, and just like a performance event, people paid admission to see it and it was reviewed in the local papers. (slide) Charles Codman, then newly arrived in Portland, almost certainly saw *The Passage of the Delaware* here. It must have made a big impression on him, because sixteen years later he incorporated it into the central design of a parade banner that he made for the Calais Frontier guard, a Maine militia company.

(Slide: Cole) Charles Octavius Cole was another Portland painter of the time, and he is credited with being Portland's first *resident* portraitist, as opposed to an itinerant portrait painter like Brewster and Prior were—much like Codman is remembered as the city's first resident landscape painter. As Cole found success with his portraits and became more established in his field he took on the additional role of promoting the arts widely in Portland, both by providing art lessons and by exhibiting the work of local artists, past and present, in his studio on Center street. Portland's artist studios—like Cole's and Codman's—eventually became known as one of the city's attractions. In 1833, a correspondent from the Boston Transcript wrote in the Portland Advertiser:[*slide*]

> In my enumerations of the attractions of Portland, I must not forget the studios of our painters. These form indeed a centre of attraction to people of taste, whether residents or strangers, and are among the most popular lounges which the city contains.

But not every artist in Portland was a professional artist or even a grown-up. (Slide: Twombly sampler) Maine schoolgirls made highly detailed and intricate needlework in the early 19th century, mostly in the female academies that were spread throughout southern Maine. Portland schools tended to adopt this twining, satin-stitched rose border that you see here, along with the genealogical information that makes them so valuable to today's historians of material culture. From the words that the sampler maker herself stitched onto this work, we know that it was made by Mary Twombly of Portland in 1817, when she was just twelve years old. From what we know of other samplers from the same place and time, it's been suggested that it was made in the Portland school of Rachel Hall Neal—who coincidentally, or perhaps not coincidentally, was the mother of John Neal, Portland's resident patron of the arts and the mentor of Charles Codman. (Codman ad) An interesting sidebar here is that we know, from contemporary newspaper advertisements, that Charles Codman claimed to provide designs for ladies' needlework during his early years in Portland [click]. If that's so, it's reasonable to think that he provided designs for some of these Portland schoolgirl samplers—and that perhaps this is an original point of

connection between him and John Neal—but that remains an open question.
(slide: pigeon) Codman did not have many students of his own, but he was a mentor to John Greenleaf Cloudman, who in turn became a teacher to a generation of aspiring young artists. This painting of a stuffed passenger pigeon set up in Cloudman's studio is by one of his students, whose name has been lost to time. The painting functions as a kind of memorial on a couple of different levels: first, because of course the passenger pigeon was so overhunted for its beautiful feathers and its meat that it is now extinct; and second, because according to local legend this stuffed pigeon was the one remaining specimen from the collections of the Portland Society of Natural History, whose building was destroyed by fire in 1854. The mountainous view beyond the pigeon is a total invention, just an opportunity for this student to develop their landscape-painting skills, but the columned building you see in the middle ground is a reasonably faithful rendering of the Society's ruined and roofless building.

So you can see that by midcentury there is a lot going on here in Portland. [slide] And so to harness all of this great artistic energy and entrepreneurship, our friend John Neal took it upon himself to organize the first large-scale exhibition of local art in Portland, as part of a fair hosted by the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association in 1838. What you're looking at here is a diploma that was distributed as an award in each display category. A firm that called itself Wilson & Putney received this diploma along with a silver medal for the best specimen of Military and Natural Otter Caps. But there was art on view too! The exhibition included more than 70 paintings and at least 40 prints and was accompanied by a printed catalogue in which Neal individually critiqued all the paintings in the exhibition. You may also be interested to note that this diploma for the otter-cap-makers is signed by the then-president of the Association, the mirror-maker James Todd. So you can see that the Mechanics exhibition really sought to bring together artisans of all stripes, and to introduce to the residents of Portland the idea that art production was to be valued, and supported, and celebrated, as much as anything else made in Maine.

(Slide: banner) The Maine Charitable Mechanic Association also regularly hosted a parade in which sub-groups of tradesman marched together under their own banners. This banner from the 1841 parade represents the Painters, Glaziers, and Brushmakers trade, strong evidence that by this time the arts were not only a major presence here in Portland, but also that artists and those in the associated trades were fully recognized as professionals. There are seventeen of these banners, all representing a different trade, all of them acquired by the Maine Historical Society in 2010 directly from the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association itself—which remains alive and well, and to this day you can still become a member and visit their library and historic building on Congress Street just a few doors down from Maine Historical Society.

(Slide: daguerreotype) The middle of the nineteenth century also brought about an entirely new industry and art form with the development of photography; in fact, there were many photographers among Mechanics' members. Photography's earliest commercial form, invented in 1839, was the daguerreotype, a unique image that was produced on a specially treated metal plate, as you just saw in the picture of the ruins of the Portland Society of Natural History. The daguerreotype also became a very popular alternative way to create a portrait, and before long there were daguerreotype studios in Portland specializing in exactly that. Maine Historical Society has an outstanding collection of local daguerreotypes, and I'm just including just a few here to show you the range of people who were sat for them: William Willis, a historian and

author; the painter John Greenleaf Cloudman, the pigeon guy; and Julia Dearborn Wingate, who lived in the McLellan House and was a descendant of Major General Henry Dearborn, whose painted portrait by Gilbert Stuart we saw just a little while ago.

As you can see, daguerreotypes bear little resemblance to the photographs of today, and the process was completely different too. Sitters had to remain motionless for an extended period of time to have their daguerreotype taken—which is the real reason that nobody is smiling in old photographs, because it's impossible to keep a smile on your face for so long—and what you were left with was a single, unique, unreproducible image rather than a negative that could be printed multiple times. Daguerreotypes are tiny—smaller than an index card—and they have a sort of ghostly appearance: they have to be held at a certain angle to see them clearly. They were also delicate, and for that reason they were often presented in little cases that were meant to be handled and opened only when the photo was to be viewed. So while daguerreotypes dipped into the portrait-painter's market to some degree, it would be a long time, not really until the 20th century, before the photograph would fully eclipse the painted portrait.

Thanks in large part to John Neal's efforts like the Charitable Mechanics exhibition, the arts truly blossomed in Portland in the 1840s and '50s. Neal reviewed and promoted painters like Codman and Cloudman in the local papers, and the attention they received from him helped them establish a market for their work.(slide: Dead Pearl Diver) One of the artists Neal mentored in particular is the sculptor Benjamin Paul Akers, known familiarly as Paul, who created *The Dead Pearl Diver*, which is now in the collection of the Portland Museum of Art. In an article in the *Portland Advertiser* in 1853, Neal urged the citizens of Portland to patronize Akers, saying that he hoped that Akers, quote, "should be allowed to escape starvation until the world [may] get acquainted with his capabilities," unquote. With the help of various local patrons, Akers financed a three-year residency in Rome, where he studied classical sculpture and met other American expatriates. Among these was the novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, recently graduated from Bowdoin College, whose 1860 novel *The Marble Faun* deals specifically with American sculptors working in Rome. Hawthorne describes artwork by his fictional protagonist, Kenyon, that match up specifically with known sculptures by Akers, including a bust of the English poet John Milton, now in the collection of the Colby College Museum of Art, and *The Dead Pearl Diver* itself.

A remarkable written resource on Portland's early 19th-century artistic community actually comes to us through Akers. In the collection of the Saco Museum, just south of here, is an unpublished autobiography by Paul's brother Charles Akers, who was also an artist, and who worked as Paul's studio assistant in both Portland and Rome. Charles gives us some great descriptions of Paul's Portland studio, or at least his memory of them many decades later, and I'm going to share a passage with you:[slide}

> It was [he writes] the whole upper loft of a three-story business building near the foot of Exchange Street, afterwards burnt in the Great Fire of '66. Each end of this loft provided a small working studio, separate from the main hall by Venetian blinds, the hall being used as a place of exhibition by Paul and his brother artist, Mr. Tilton, who was a young painter.[slide]
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> I was amazed at the many beautiful things I saw here. The walls were hung with paintings, old and new, while some of Paul's busts of Portland notables were scattered

> about on pedestals, together with a few antiques, plaster casts of Lord Byron and others—and even the stove was surmounted by a three-fourths life size statue of Washington in cast-iron. There were also some plants, including a large cactus, growing in sculptured pots, which added much to the beauty of the whole. Books, mostly of poetry, lay on the table. [slide]
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> I had never seen such beautiful things, and was astonished. Should I ever gain a knowledge of this exalted life, and become familiar with such objects?

One of the reasons this passage is so rich is that it paints a picture of a city that is just filled with material culture. Just as the writer from the *Transcript* had said, artists' studios were an arena for the display of all these wonderful things that Portland was producing and importing, not just art but also books, and horticulture, architectural stonework, and interior décor.

(Slide: Tilton) The "Mr. Tilton," incidentally, that Charles refers to as Paul's "brother artist" and studio-mate was John Rollin Tilton, one of the other Portland-area artists who would go on to live and paint in Rome, and who was there the same time as Akers and the others. This painting by Tilton of St. Peter's basilica at twilight is now a part of the Portland Museum of Art's collection. All of these artists continued to be consistently praised by John Neal in Portland publications during their years away, in articles that made it clear how popular their paintings and sculptures were with European audiences, and that the citizens of Portland ought to similarly value and patronize the artists that came out of their own state and city.

(Slide: Diamond Cove) At the same time that many of Portland's artists were having these global experiences, others were becoming more interested in their local people and places. Beginning with the fireboards he had painted in 1829, Charles Codman was one of the first artists to choose Portland itself as a subject, and he celebrated the natural beauty of Casco Bay with his many views of Diamond Cove on Great Diamond Island. Diamond Cove was a popular destination for day- trippers and picnickers, and soon it became a favorite subject for many local artists, poets, and writers as well. (slide) In 1836, one of Codman's paintings was reproduced as a print for the literary magazine called the *Portland Sketchbook*, which was the project of a remarkable woman named Ann Sophia Stephens, who went on to become an editor at the *Ladies' Home Companion* in New York and a frequent contributor to *Godey's Ladies' Book*. Inspired by this widely distributed print of Codman's Diamond Cove painting, both amateur and professional artists started producing Diamond Cove views that were variations on Codman's theme. (slide) There are, for instance, dozens of pastel on sandpaper drawings of essentially this same scene, and we know that, like needlework, this was a medium that was popular in local girls' academies. It was used train them in drawing and painting, with the thought that the blendable chalks on the textured surface of the paper mimicked, at less expense, the way paint behaves on canvas. So this is another really tantalizing connection between Codman and these academies for young ladies.

In any case, it's clear that Codman played an important role in establishing an artistic interest in our local landscapes that still colors the Maine painting tradition today. Only a few years earlier John Neal had lamented the difficulties that landscape painters faced in finding a market for their work. (Slide: Neal quote) He wrote that "It is a thankless calling, and at best a precarious one, that of a landscape-painter in our day." However, by the mid-1840s landscapes were all the rage, and both artists and patrons were recognizing that Maine provided some of the most engaging landscape subjects anywhere.

(slide: HBB Coyle and Sugar Refinery) Harrison Bird Brown was another one of Portland's most prolific and successful artists. Early on he marketed his skills to well-to-do Portland citizens who wanted a portrait of their home or business. On the top here is the Back Cove estate of J. B. Coyle, the owner of the Portland Steam Packet company, and below is a view of the Forest City Sugar Refinery, located near the mouth of the Fore River. One of the directors of the Forest City Sugar Refinery, Theophilus Cushing Hersey, was a frequent patron of Brown's, and this painting may have been made to order for him. (Slide: HBB Cushing Island) Harrison Bird Brown lived in a handsome home on Danforth Street, but he also maintained a studio on Cushing Island, and he became particularly well known for his views of the surf crashing against the dramatic headland there known as White Head. A different version of this painting traveled to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 as part of the official selection for the Maine pavilion.

This interest in local attractions and local history was stimulated by the publication of the *History of Portland* by William Willis, whose daguerreotype portrait we saw just a few minutes ago. It was first printed in 1831 and then reprinted in an expanded version in 1865.Willis's volume celebrated not just the history but also the amenities of Portland, from its eastern and western promenades to its industries to its buildings. Not to be outdone, in 1874 John Neal authored a book called *Portland Illustrated*, which functioned as a sort of city guide to Portland, focusing particularly on cultural events, arts, and architecture. (Slide: Kimball Marine Hospital) Among the buildings Neal mentioned specifically in his book is the Marine Hospital that was built on Martin's Point in 1855, which still stands today, and which you see here in both the illustration from the book and an 1859 painting by Charles Frederick Kimball. Neal said of the building: [slide] "Beyond all question, it is one of the best proportioned and most beautiful of our public buildings . . . occupying as it does a conspicuous elevation, overlooking our whole city, and Casco Bay, with the islands for which we are so celebrated, and the open sea, along the whole sweep of the horizon." Neal's words and Kimball's lovely painting provide just one more example of how Portland residents and painters took pride in their city and found its views a worthy subject for their art.

(Slide: Corey chairs) Throughout this time, decorative and functional arts continued to be produced, as well. Like portrait painters, other craftsmen and artisans customized their wares to suit a growing middle-class population in Portland. Among Portland's furniture makers of this time was Walter Corey, a Massachusetts native who came to Portland in 1836 and set up a storefront on Exchange Street and manufacturing facilities on the Presumpscot River in Windham. Corey mechanized and streamlined his production line in order to manufacture high-quality furniture more quickly and in greater quantities than the earlier bespoke system had allowed. In fact, he named his shop "Walter Corey's Steam Manufactory," effectively advertising his business as a place that was about mass production. Pieces from the Corey factory, particularly chairs, were indeed sold in stores throughout the eastern seaboard; contemporary accounts indicate that the shop at its peak produced as many as 20,000 chairs per year.

(Slide: Dunham) Pewtersmiths Rufus Dunham and Freeman Porter adopted similar philosophies with their rival shops in Westbrook, which also took advantage of the water power provided by the Presumpscot. Their products echoed the forms of fine silver, but their less expensive materials and mechanized production made them more affordable for everyday use and for middle-class homes. Rufus Dunham was one of a group of early metalsmiths in Maine who

capitalized on the new technology for "Britannia" pewter, which used antimony in the alloy and was therefore lighter, stronger, and brighter than traditional lead-based pewter. This more sturdy pewter could withstand the newest manufacturing techniques—such as mechanized lathes, rollers, and buffers—which Dunham used in order to increase his production and diversify his inventory.

(Slide: Portland Glass) The Portland Glass Company, which was near the sugar refinery on the Fore River, was in operation in Portland from only 1863 to 1873, but during its peak, it was one of the largest glass factories in the country. It is best remembered today for its pressed glass, which was both decorative and functional. William O. Davis, the head designer, developed and patented several unique designs, including the Tree of Life, which is what you see here. And I'm sharing this detail with you to show how Davis actually worked his own name into the design for the large-scale Tree of Life compotes [demonstrate]; in fact, that's one of the ways you can distinguish an authentic piece of Portland Glass from those of its many imitators.

(Slide: Morse) The Portland Glass Company was one of the few businesses to survive the tragedy of 1866 that has come to be known as the Great Fire. In July of that year, sparks from some Independence Day firecrackers set fire to the wharves and high winds blew the fire into the city proper. The alarm was sounded in enough time so that there were few fatalities, but the damage to Portland's downtown was so severe that 1,800 buildings were destroyed and nearly 10,000 people were left homeless. Even in the midst of this desolation, Portlanders were moved to create art. The fire was captured in oil on canvas by architectural draftsman and amateur painter George Frederick Morse, who according to local legend set his easel up in various locations all over the city while the fire raged. Numerous photographs and prints documented the aftermath of the fire, but Morse's paintings are among the few to envision the city as it was actually ablaze.

(Slide: Monument and Longfellow Squares) For some time afterward, Portland's arts scene was sort of on autopilot as the city focused its energies on rebuilding after the devastating effects of the fire, not to mention the added stressors of the Civil War and the global financial Panic of 1873. In a remarkably short period of time, magnificent new buildings sprang up in the ashes—a new City Hall, the granite custom house that stands on Commercial street today, a new post office, and a new hospital building, which is still part of the Maine Medical Center complex on the Western prom. As part of this rebuilding effort, Portland citizens for the first time turned their attention to public art. As early as 1873 the first meetings were held to determine a site and arrange funding for a monument that would honor Portland's role in fighting the Civil War. Our Lady of the Victories, also known as the Soldiers and Sailors monument, was finally erected in Portland's Monument Square in 1891. It was the work of Lewiston-born sculptor Franklin Simmons, who like Benjamin Paul Akers had studied in Rome but continued to be celebrated as a local artist during his time away. Three years earlier Simmons had also been commissioned to create the bronze statue of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow for Longfellow Square. His local successes eventually led to his creation of a larger- than-life-size marble of General Ulysses S. Grant that currently resides in the US Capitol Building. (slide: Grant, US Capitol) Simmons felt so strongly about his native state and adopted city of Portland that in his will he left the entire contents of his Rome studio to the City of Portland, (Slide: Grant, PMA) including an earlier version of the Grant statue, which is what you see here, and many other full-size marbles. In the 1920s the City gave this collection to the Portland Museum of Art, and they form the cornerstone of that museum's collection of neoclassical sculpture to this day.

(Slide: Fitz Henry Lane) Both before and after the rebuilding push, a great effort was also made to improve both rail and steam service into the city and the state. This dramatically increased access to Maine not only for businesses and shipping but also for tourism, which was a rapidly growing industry at the time. Intrigued with the thought of a wilderness here in their own backyards, landscape painters based in larger northeastern cities were drawn to Maine. Artists like Fitz Henry Lane, whose 1852 view of Castine Harbor you see here on the left, explored and painted points downeast such as Camden and Mount Desert, as well as inland attractions like Mount Katahdin and what would become Baxter State Park. Maine was a regular destination for Frederic Edwin Church, who painted Mount Katahdin throughout his career, as well as many other artists now celebrated as stars of the Hudson River School of landscape painting. When paintings like these were seen in galleries and private homes Boston and New York and Philadelphia, they provided many people with their first views of what are now some of Maine's most famous landscapes. They inspired people to visit the state and see its beauties for themselves, not only wealthy rusticators looking for a vacation spot, but also other artists.

For the most part, these artists passed over Portland in favor of more remote destinations; however, their presence in the state helped to stimulate and transform the local arts scene. (Slide: Twilight at Stroudwater) Portland painters learned from them about painting out-of-doors and about current trends in art overseas. In the 1860s, a group of Portland businessmen formed a weekend painting club called the "Brush'uns," which went on painting excursions in and around Portland, rain and shine, summer and winter. (slide of Kimball at work) Among their favorite destinations were Great Diamond Island, Delano Park in Cape Elizabeth, and the Stroudwater River, which is what you see here in this painting by Charles Frederick Kimball, whose painting of Martin's Point we saw just a little while ago. Kimball was truly part of the lineage of art history in Portland. His grandfather, John Kimball, Sr., was the housewright who built the Hugh McLellan House in 1801, and his father-in-law was the painter John Greenleaf Cloudman. Kimball himself was a cabinetmaker by trade, although as you can see, he was also gifted painter.

(Slide: Joe Pie Weed) Other members of the Brush'uns included George Frederick Morse, whose paintings of the great fire we just looked at, and John Calvin Stevens, who would become Portland's most celebrated architects of the turn of the century. This is Stevens's view of Delano Park you see here, and it's typical of the work the Brush'uns produced: their paintings were almost always completed out-of-doors, and they are generally very impressionistic in feel, very interested in the changing effects of light and atmosphere on their local landscape.

(Slide: Weatherbeaten) There was at least one artist "from away" who did not overlook Portland and its surroundings. Winslow Homer had already established a reputation as one of most gifted and innovative painters in the country when he set up a studio on Prouts Neck in Scarborough in 1883. Some of the strongest and most affecting works of his career are his monumental paintings of the surf crashing on the rocks right outside his studio door. Homer was a bona fide member of the Portland community, and not exactly the hermit he is often thought to be. He visited friends here and had them visit him on Prouts Neck, he came into town to do his banking and buy art supplies, and, most significantly, he exhibited his work here, at what was then the Portland Society of Art and is now the Portland Museum of Art. In addition to Homer's incalculable contribution to the history of art both nationally and internationally, he played a crucial role in establishing Maine's reputation as a destination for artists. You don't have to look beyond the

paintings on view in many of today's Maine art galleries to see his lasting influence.

(slide: Laing) And that influence extended into other artistic media, as well, as you can see very clearly in this Homer-like view of Casco Bay by local photographer Frank Laing. That's Ram Island Light you see in the distance, so the photo was probably taken near what is now Fort Williams park in Cape Elizabeth. Photography had continued to gain popularity as an art form from the early days of the daguerreotype, but shooting was now done on glass plates, which produced a negative that could be printed multiple times onto paper. Because it had suddenly become so much easier and less expensive to shoot and develop photographs, all kinds of people began to take up photography, both professionally and as talented amateurs. Camera clubs became popular nationwide, including in Maine. The Portland Camera Club was founded in 1899, so just barely within the confines of this talk about the 19th century, and Frank Laing, a professional photographer and framer, was among those involved in its founding. The club continues to exist and meets regularly at the Woodfords Club in Portland, but in its early days it actually met right on the Portland peninsula, on the third floor of the Hugh McLellan House, which was then the home of the Portland Society of Art.

(Slide: PSA memorabilia) It's sort of a historical coincidence that Winslow Homer's arrival in Portland in 1883 roughly coincided with the founding of the Portland Society of Art, just the year before. The founders of the Society, which was the earliest incarnation not only of the Portland Museum of Art but also what is now the Maine College of art, included Brush'uns members Charles Frederick Kimball, George Frederick Morse, and John Calvin Stevens as well as the city's foremost landscape painter, Harrison Bird Brown. They were driven by their shared mission to, as it reads in the by-laws dating from the founding year, [slide] "foster an appreciation for the arts, mount exhibitions, and found a library, art school, and Museum."

(Slide: Benson) The first instructor for the art school was Frank Weston Benson, who would later achieve national fame for his impressionistic portraits of his daughters, painted at his summer home on North Haven Island off Maine's Midcoast. Benson's work exemplifies the kind of impressionistic technique that was being promoted by the Society in its earliest years—and also serves as a useful illustration for how the art of portraiture had evolved from the beginning of the century to the end. The society also drew the attention and support of wealthy and influential citizens of Portland, like, for instance (slide: Henry St. John Smith), Henry and Ellen St. John Smith, whose portraits by John Singer Sargent you see here. Henry St. John Smith was a lawyer and a native of Portland who lived in Cape Elizabeth, and he was also widely traveled and knowledgeable about art in both the United States and Europe. He was part of a new breed of Portland resident whose tastes and experiences were global and cosmopolitan but who were nevertheless steadfast supporters of their local community, much like the people who are the pillars of our arts and cultural organizations today. Together with more than 30 of their friends and colleagues in Portland, in 1888 the St. John Smiths helped to fund the purchase the very first work of art for the new museum's collection, (slide) Benjamin Paul Akers's *The Dead Pearl Diver*, the same marble figure that had been praised by John Neal and immortalized in literature by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The purchase of the *Dead Pearl Diver* and the inauguration of the museum's permanent collection was a huge event in Portland, with a dedication ceremony and a public reading of a poem composed for the occasion by Elizabeth Akers Allen, the sculptor's widow. (Slide:

Elizabeth Akers and Baxter Building) (What you're seeing here is a portrait bust of Elizabeth made by her husband in Rome, shortly before they were married.) The Portland Society of Art and its fledgling art museum did not yet have a permanent home in the city, so all of these festivities took place at the Portland Public Library, which was then located in the Baxter Building on upper Congress Street, seen here on the right. The Society used a variety of different locations for its meetings, classes, and exhibitions until 1908, when another formidable woman, (Slide: MJMS) the late Margaret Mussey Sweat, left her summer home, the McLellan House, to the Portland Society of Art in her will. And you are seeing her here in a page from one of her scrapbooks, now in the Maine Women Writers' collection at the University of New England, because she was in fact a serious writer as well as a serious philanthropist. She also left funds for modern exhibition galleries to be built in memory of her husband, the spectacularly named Lorenzo de Medici Sweat.

(Slide) In just three short years, the Lorenzo de Medici Sweat Memorial galleries, designed by John Calvin Stevens, opened to the public, as an addition to the McLellan House, with a Beaux-Arts style that echoes and compliments that earlier building's neoclassical architecture. For the first time there was a permanent home in Portland not only for the work of past artists, but also for living artists to display their work and look to the future of art in the city and the state.

So we sort of begin and end our talk with the McLellan House. From the beginning to today, it has served as an arena for the display of the arts of Portland in a way that only a historic building can. It's my hope that with the support and engagement of the people who love this place's art and history, other historic structures on the Portland Museum of Art's campus and throughout the city will also survive as public places that will honor and provide access to the stories we share.