

Charitably



Speaking

353 Southern Artery

Quincy, MA 02169

A PUBLICATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CHARITABLE MECHANIC ASSOCIATION

President's Message

Suppose you have not been attending our Quarterly meetings or have not been reading the news flashes we sent out electronically. In that case, you may not be up to date on all the significant events that have been happening at MCMA.

Our fundraising effort added over \$205,000 to our invested funds with great appreciation to each of you and our anonymous donor who matched the first \$100,000. Some of those donors have also not been at meetings for many years, yet they have continued supporting MCMA. You are all my heroes for stepping up to help ensure we continue our benevolent efforts.

The April Quarterly meeting had as our speaker, IRS supervisory special agent Elizabeth Bedoya, who spoke about the work they do ensuring that we all work under the same tax laws. She spoke of one of her cases which just last week was mentioned on the news with the defendant being jailed for defrauding the government by cashing in over \$18 million in lottery winnings and then claiming expenses to offset those winnings, thereby paying no taxes.

And lastly, the *front page* article in the *Washington Post* on May 25 about our efforts to retrieve *The Wounded Indian* sculpture was excellent and well done. I believe Paul Revere and the other founders would be very proud of our work this past quarter as we exemplified our motto, "Be Just and Fear Not."

To celebrate all these successes, please plan to join us at our July Quarterly Clambake Social on July 26, once again graciously hosted by Jessica and Paul Lohnes at their home in Bass Rocks, Gloucester. I look forward to seeing everyone there.

And as a special request, if you have not been involved in coming to meetings for a while, please consider giving us another chance to prove we are the organization you want to be involved with. And if you have thoughts on how we can be even better, I look forward to hearing from you. – **Chuck**

Helping Others

From our beginnings in 1795 MCMA had involvement with the shipbuilding trades. Many of our founding members were at that same time involved in building the *USS Constitution*, and in the following decades many others engaged in the building of wooden sailing ships, particularly the clippers of the mid-1800s. These days

our involvement takes the form of support for organizations that aim to perpetuate traditional boatbuilding skills. One such organization is the **Essex Historical Society and Shipbuilding Museum** (EHSSM). The Shipbuilding Museum dates to 1976, when it was opened by the Essex Historical Society to emphasize the town's unique shipbuilding history. In 1993 EHSSM acquired the site of the former Story family's shipyard to house the Society's 90-foot schooner-dragger *Evelina M. Goulart*, built at that same shipyard in 1927. The



Goulart provides a resource for education and continues to be a resource for shipbuilders who want to build historically accurate replicas.

EHSSM exhibits and archives are housed mainly in an 1835-built former schoolhouse, where its collection of antique tools, photographs, and documents help tell the story of the town's shipbuilding past. But the shipyard itself is peppered with tools, equipment, and boats, as well as skilled builders and students. EHSSM conducts year-round educational opportunities for students across Essex County to participate in hands-on activities where middle- and high-schoolers learn about boatbuilding and rowing, and get to participate in the building of dories, skiffs, and Sharptown Barge rowboats. This year a program aimed at 5th-graders is being developed to bring kids on site to make rowing oars and then go out on the river to use them in those student-built boats. Adult volunteers also participate in the shipyard's activities, particularly with preservation projects. Work on the preservation of the schooner *Goulart* is of course an ongoing effort. And the Museum's flagship, a replica 30-foot Chebacco boat, the *Lewis H. Story* is a completely volunteer-run and maintained boat. Built in 1998, the *Story* underwent extensive repairs and was relaunched in 2017, and is often seen out of the water undergoing maintenance during the off season, or sailing in the warmer months. *[The Chebacco boat was actually developed in Essex during the Revolutionary War, and they were built by the hundreds.]*

Our support for EHSSM has primarily included hand tools and has focused on the student programs. As we have noted in the past, such programs may be limited to basic skills training, but they afford students an



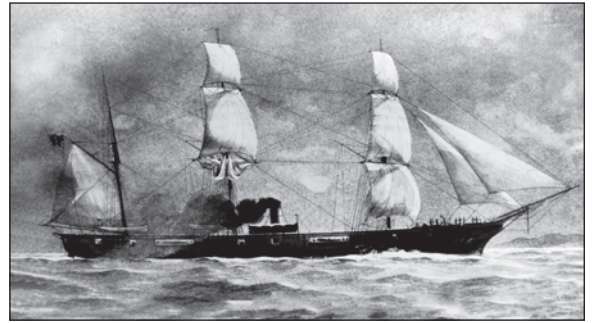
opportunity to engage in cooperative efforts in which they take direction, work with their hands, work closely with others, and gain some self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment. While these conditions pertain to all students, they seem to be especially beneficial for students with social, emotional, and behavioral issues, and we are pleased to be able to support them.



MCMA History

In our previous issue we noted that a takeaway from the accumulation of information presented in *Charitably Speaking* over the years is that MCMA and/or our members have had connections, in some way or other, to a remarkable number of events, developments and advancements in our country's history. In this issue we highlight several more, but what we're actually working toward is a full listing of these mini-articles for MCMA's website, and that list will grow as we continue to uncover these stories. Again, these articles are in no particular order, and all member names are in **boldface**.

The South Boston shop of **John Souther** had been busy building railroad locomotives and steam shovels, but during the Civil War it was given over to the needs of the government and produced the machinery for several Union warships. One of those ships was the screw sloop-of-war *USS Housatonic*, which was built at the Charlestown Navy Yard. In 1864, while engaged in the blockade of Charleston, South Carolina, *Housatonic* earned the dubious distinction of being the first ship sunk by a submarine. (That Confederate submarine was the *H.L. Hunley*, which itself sank with the loss of all hands following the attack).



Major John André
(1750-1780)

When **Benjamin Russell** reached the age of eighteen in 1780 he joined the Continental Army. Stationed for a time at West Point, he was one of the guards who escorted British Major John André to his place of execution. (André, of course, was the spy who had collaborated with General Benedict Arnold to surrender the fort at West Point.) Russell would later become an original member of MCMA, and would serve as our third president.

Though architect **Alexander Parris** is perhaps better known for his Quincy Marketplace or his work at the Charlestown Navy Yard, in the 1830s Parris began to design and construct lighthouses and beacons for the U.S. Treasury Department. His work for the government took him up and down the east coast, from Maine

to Florida. Parris' lighthouses were typically built of stone, in a tapered style often referred to as "windswept," and in some quarters these structures are what he is most remembered for today.



Lighthouse at Execution Rock, N.Y.



When the Burnet House, designed by architect **Isaiah Rogers**, opened in Cincinnati in 1850, the *London Illustrated News* called it "the finest hotel in the world." On March 20, 1864, Generals Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman met in a parlor on the second floor, spread out maps, and made the plans for Sherman's march through Georgia that would help end the Civil War.

Burnet House (1850), Cincinnati, Ohio

Samuel Yendell was the ship's carpenter on the Boston-based *Columbia Rediviva*, the first ship to enter the sandbar-obstructed mouth of a river in the Pacific Northwest. During a nine-day venture up that river in May of 1792, the ship's captain planted an American flag, claimed the territory for the United States, and named the Columbia River after his ship. Though little was thought of the discovery at the time, that trading expedition was later used to bolster the claim of the United States (vs. Britain) to the Pacific Northwest Territories, a dispute not finally resolved until the Oregon Treaty of 1846 ceded to Britain the portion later renamed British Columbia, and to the U.S. the area containing the future states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.



The first aerial photograph in the United States was taken in 1860 (from a tethered hot air balloon above Boston Common) by **James Wallace Black**. No mean accomplishment, given the complexity of the photographic process of the time, this is also the oldest known aerial photograph still in existence anywhere.

Boston piano maker **Jonas Chickering** in 1850 urged Worcester wire-manufacturer **Ichabod Washburn** to improve upon the quality and availability of piano wires then in use. (All musical wire at the time was imported from Europe.) Washburn experimented for years until in 1856 he was able to produce and patent his process to produce wire which he could profess to be the best in the world.

Washburn had amazing success in business and accumulated a substantial estate, the bulk of which he gave away during his lifetime. With one of his endowments he co-founded in 1865 one of the first technical schools in the country, later to be re-named Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Another endowment saved Lincoln College from closing its doors, which led this Topeka school to change its name to Washburn College. Even today, the name used by its men's athletic teams is "the Ichabods."



Joseph Wightman was elected Mayor of Boston in 1860, defeating **Frederic W. Lincoln, Jr.** Though Wightman's administration had some real accomplishments, it was defined by only one issue. In October 1861 Fort Warren in Boston Harbor began to house both Confederate and political prisoners. Initially told to



prepare for a population of 100 prisoners in total, the first ship to arrive had on board 155 political prisoners plus over 600 military prisoners. Wightman toured the facility in November, determined that immediate steps were needed to prevent an absolute disaster, and arranged for delivery of stores that had been donated to assist Union servicemen. For this humanitarian act he was supported by some but vilified by most, and he was defeated for re-election in 1862 ... by Frederic W. Lincoln, Jr.