Celebrate America's 250th and the Penobscot River's Maritime History, July 28-August 3

The Penobscot Maritime Heritage Association is celebrating America's 250th birthday with a big splash. Historic schooners, racing yachts, row boats and more will be navigating the waters of the lower Penobscot River basin from July 28-August 3. They will be honoring Maine's rich maritime past in the waterfront towns that anchor the geographic area known as the 4-Port Loop. This year, the anchor ports are Bucksport, Castine, Searsport and Bangor/Brewer.

Bucksport

Bucksport welcomes maritime history enthusiasts from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, August 1 with Waterfront Displays , movies and more! The featured attraction is the arrival of the schooner *Harvey Gamage.* There will be on-board tours of the *Harvey Gamage*. Not only during Saturday's events, but also on Sunday, August 2 from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

The *Harvey Gamage*, is a 131' gaff rigged schooner launched in 1973 in South Bristol, Maine. The U.S. Congress created a special service category of vessel for sail training and the *Harvey Gamage* is one of a handful of vessels licensed for this service. She has been educating students along the east coast almost continuously since her launch. The schooner will be tied up on the Bucksport Municipal Dock.,94 Main Street, Bucksport.

As an added bonus, the *Harvey Gamage* is offering a once-in-a-lifetime trips up the Penobscot River from Bucksport to Bangor on Friday, July 31. Travel upriver through history aboard the historic schooner *Harvey Gamage* during this one-way morning voyage from Bucksport (departing at 7:30 a.m.) to Bangor. There will also be a one-way afternoon return voyage from Bangor (departing at 1:45 p.m.) to Bucksport. As you sail along the Penobscot River, historians from the Penobscot Marine Museum will share the stories of the river's historic communities, old wharves, maritime landmarks, and industries. You will discover how the Penobscot River's reach into the heart of Maine helped shape the region's maritime history.

Guests will be joined by Penobscot Marine Museum historians Cipperly Good and Jon Johansen, who will help bring the river's past to life, along with Jeff Roberts, a historical reenactor who will speak about the Penobscot Expedition.

Whether you are an experienced sailor or stepping aboard for the first time, you are invited to become part of the crew. Help raise and trim the sails, take a turn at the helm, learn about traditional seamanship, or relax on deck and enjoy the river.

Every voyage is shaped by the wind, tides, weather, and river conditions. Guests are welcome to help raise and trim the sails, take a turn at the helm, learn about traditional seamanship, or simply relax on deck and enjoy Maine's scenery beneath *Harvey Gamage's* canvas.

Following the sail, passengers will disembark at the Bangor City Dock at approximately 11:15 AM. A chartered bus will arrive at 12:15 PM to transport morning passengers back to their vehicles at the Bucksport Town Dock.

The afternoon voyage will begin boarding at 1:45 PM at the Bangor City Dock at 5 Front Street. The *Harvey Gamage* is expected to arrive at the Bucksport Town Dock at approximately 5:30 PM. A chartered bus will arrive at 5:45 PM to return afternoon passengers to their vehicles in Bangor.

Your ticket includes:

- One-way voyage aboard the *Harvey Gamage* from Bucksport to Bangor or Bangor to Bucksport
- Historical interpretation from Penobscot Marine Museum historians
- Historical reenactors aboard the vessel
- Chartered bus transportation from Bangor back to Bucksport
- Water, soda, and light snacks
- A U.S. Coast Guard-licensed captain and professional crew
- Opportunities to participate in sailing the schooner

Proceeds from this special fundraising sail will support the Penobscot Marine Museum and youth sail-training programs through the Marine Learning Project.

Sailing and arrival times are approximate and may change based on wind, tides, weather, and river conditions.

Guests may bring beer or wine to enjoy responsibly while underway. Please dress for changing conditions on the water and wear comfortable, secure footwear. Each direction is

a separately ticketed event; guests wishing to sail both ways must purchase tickets for both voyages. Reserve your spot online at https://www.marinelearningproject.org/upcoming-sails

THIS JUST IN! The Harvey Gamage will now offer the following additional special one-way sailing excursions: A morning sail from Bucksport to Castine on Monday, August 3 departing at 7:45 a.m.; another sail from Castine to Stonington; a new sail from Stonington to North Haven; then a trip from North Haven to Rockland! For details and reservations, visit https://www.marinelearningproject.org/upcoming-sails

The Alamo Theatre and Northeast Historical Films will offer a variety of historic maritime history films from their archives on Saturday, August 1 from 12-3 p.m. The showings are free and the Alamo Theatre is air conditioned for your viewing comfort.

The waterfront public parking lot will host an Exhibit Area on Saturday, August 1 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. where visitors can learn about Maine Maritime Academy's new educational and employment opportunities; video presentation about Maine's First Ship, the *Virginia*; sailing and navigation training opportunities; and Rockport artist Ken Hendrickson will display his paintings of America's history. Maritime Academy Professor Paul Wlodkowski will give a presentation on the "Past, Present and Future of Power Generation" in the waterfront gazebo.

The University of Maine's Advanced Composites 3D printed boat, *3Dirigo*, will travel by land and be on display near the tent. Come on down and speak with the student reps to learn all about the world's second largest 3-D printer! 3Dirigo holds two world records, being the world's largest 3D printed boat, and being the world's largest 3D printed object. The boat was printed in 72 hours by the world's largest 3D printer and is 25′ long and weighs 5,000 lbs. The Advanced Structures and Composites Center is an independent research unit at the University of Maine that provides research, education, and economic development encompassing material sciences, manufacturing and engineering of composites and structures.

While in Bucksport, be sure to stroll the beautiful waterfront riverwalk and enjoy a bite to eat at the many new restaurants along Main Street and beyond.

Shakespeare Under the Stars again graces the stage at Fort Knox Historic Site in Prospect, ME. From 6-8:30 p.m. July 30-Sunday August 2, the stage and parade field inside Fort Knox fills with blankets and camp chairs as fans fan out around the Ten Bucks Theatre performers to be fully immersed in this timeless experience. Tickets are $15.00 for adults, $10 for students.

Moving from the past to the future… To cap off the day and to celebrate America's 250th birthday, hundreds of drones will fly over the Penobscot River for the first time ever for a spectacular Lighted Drone Show at 8:45 p.m. Bring your chairs and get to the riverwalk early for a great viewing spot and bring your cameras! *NOTE: Viewing the drone show is best done from Bucksport. Fort Knox is closed to the public at 8 p.m.*

Castine

Castine is packed with things to do during the 4-Port Loop's celebration of America's 250th birthday, July 28-August 3! Start by seeing Maine Maritime Academy's new cutting-edge national security multi-mission vessel, the 525' *State of Maine.* It will serve as its next generation training ship, holding 600 cadets. See this massive ship in port starting on July 12. Due to access restrictions, there will not be any onboard tours, but there are plenty of opportunities to take photos of this behemoth in port.

The historic Dyce Head Lighthouse will open its tower doors and will also have new historic displays from 1-4 p.m. on Tuesday, July 28. Don't miss this rare opportunity.

The yachting crown jewels of the Principality of Monaco will be in Castine Harbor from 12-4 p.m. on Wednesday, July 29 at the Town Dock, Castine Yacht Club and Eaton's Boatyard. The *Viola*, a Fife-designed gaff cutter, built in 1908, and one of the crown jewels of the Yacht Club of Monaco joins the *Notre Dame des Flots*. Built in 1947 as a gaff-rigged North Sea fishing schooner, *Notre Dame des Flots* was abandoned on the beaches of Dunkirk, before being restored from 1975 to 1983. In addition, the *EROS*, a 115-foot schooner will be in Castine Harbor from Tuesday evening, July 28 to Wednesday evening, July 29. It was built by Brooks Motor Craft, Lowestoft, England in 1939. These extraordinary vessels are available for photos, but no onboard tours.

Come to Witherle Library on Wednesday, July 29 from 4 to 4:30 pm for a reenactment by the Castine Historic Conversations Group of the decisive conversations that led to the infamous Penobscot Expedition of 1779. Attendees will witness the discourse over four presentations, each providing insight from both sides of the conflict, including American revolutionaries General Lovell, commander of U.S. land forces, his second in command, General Wadsworth, and commander of US naval forces, Commodore Saltonstall. Attendees will learn the British perspective from the commanders of British land and naval forces, General McLean and Captain Mowat. A Q/A will be included at the end.

Also on Wednesday, July 29 at the Castine Town Dock, from 6-8 p.m., take in Castine's Waterfront Wednesday with live music, featuring the Nu-Force Big Band directed by Brian

Nadeau. Grab some food at the food truck, and the new Town Dock Eatery and Danny Murphy's Irish Pub.

The 27th annual Castine Classic Yacht Races blast off at 12 p.m. on Thursday, July 30.

The Wilson Museum hosts a special presentation at 1 p.m. on Thursday, July 30 by David Wyman. Catch his fascinating talk about the museum's new replica of the *Defence*, the 85' ship that was scuttled during the Penobscot Expedition in 1779.

The *Harvey Gamage* arrives in port on Monday, August 3 with their new crew of students.

There are many ongoing events and activities this summer in historic Castine. Add these to your summertime adventures!

The Wilson Museum is open Mondays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturdays- Sundays 2-5 p.m.

The Perkins House offers tours on Wednesdays and Sundays, 2-5 p.m.

See British fort remnants from the Penobscot Expedition and War of 1812 at Fort George. It is free to tour on your own, from sunrise to sunset.

Fort Madison is also open to tour the ramparts that were built to defend Castine in War of 1812. Check it out from sunrise to sunset.

Visitors are free to walk through the Witherle Woods Preserve to see the sites of the Penobscot Expedition of 1779. For a Virtual History Tour of Two Wars- Penobscot Expedition siege and battles of 1779 and War of 1812, visit https://castine.stqry.app/story/93235.

The Castine Historical Society hosts a professionally curated exhibit about the American Revolution. They are open Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sundays, 1-4 p.m. They also offer free 1-Hour Walking Tours of Castine history at 10 a.m. on Fridays, Saturdays and Mondays. FMI visit www.castine.me.us.

Castine Touring Company also offers riding tours of historic Castine for a fee. https://www.castinetouringcompany.org

Lil Toot offers boat tours of Castine Harbor and the surrounding area for a fee. https://www.castinecruises.com/

Bangor

Bangor will host Sailing Ships Maine on Sunday, August 2, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., when they bring their two 32-foot long Whitby (Cornish) Pilot Gigs, the *Presumpscot* and *Merrymeeting II*, to the cruise ship docks. They will offer three sessions (10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 2:15 p.m.) of free Gig Boat rowing lessons. Pre-registration is necessary, as space is limited. Sign up here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4EAAAC2CA5FBC25-64784836-experience#/

Then get ready for Gig Boat rowing competitions with area rowing teams between the bridges from 1-2 p.m. Come on down and cheer them on from the Bangor and Brewer riverwalks!

Stop by Sailing Ships Maine's booth to learn about their Overnight Sail Training Program for high school students. It is an accredited program in nautical science. Students will become part of the crew and learn all aspects of sailing a cruising sailboat including navigation, sail handling, culinary, ship handling, engineering, voyage planning, weather prediction, lookout, and safe operations. Daily schedule includes sailing, visiting islands by small boat, and learning in company with six students and two crew. A licensed professional captain and deckhand educator are aboard. Program runs rain or shine. Their next class sets sail from South Freeport's Town Wharf for an August 24-28 trip. FMI: www.sailingshipsmaine.org.

While in Bangor, walk along the riverside trail that connects to the East Coast Greenway, Kenduskeag Stream Trail, and River City Trail, and features beautiful views of the Penobscot River, sculptures, a public small craft dock, and food trucks. In the summer, the Waterfront Park is home to a number of concerts and festivals.

Events culminate with a special encore performance of the Drone Light Show over the Penobscot River in Bangor/Brewer on Sunday, August 2 at 8:45 p.m. Grab your lawn chairs and cameras, get to your viewing spot along the Bangor and Brewer riverwalks and get ready for 10+ minutes of innovative lightworks celebrating America's 250th birthday!

Brewer

Brewer will bring history alive along their beautiful Riverwalk from on Sunday, August 2, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The paved Brewer Riverwalk hugs the shoreline of the Penobscot River. It is wide, flat, and lighted, and features numerous benches along the way. The mowed grass between the walkway and shore provide wide-open views of the river for its entire length. The half-acre Children's Garden, located midway along the trail, features themed plantings, short walking paths and even a waterfall.

Historian Jeff Roberts will present a display and talk about ill-fated Penobscot Expedition on Sunday, August 2 at 1 p.m. Check out his period encampment on the Brewer Riverwalk and learn all about the 1779 scuttling of America's Navy ships in America's worst Naval disaster until Pearl Harbor. Many of these ships still reside on the bottom of the river between Bangor and Brewer.

Stop by the Penobscot Maritime Heritage Association's booth and see Joshua Chamberlain's sword and the slave shirt from the Underground Railroad from the Civil War era, from 12-3 p.m.

Maine Maritime Academy will speak about their new energy program… including educational and employment opportunities.

The University of Maine's Advanced Composites 3-D printed boat, *3Dirigo*, will also be on display on the Riverwalk.

Ice was also a big business in the Penobscot River. Be sure to see Getchell Ice Company's impressive new bronze and stone monument honoring the ice industry. It can be found on the north end of the Brewer Riverwalk.

Then prepare to be wowed! Events culminate with a special encore performance of the Drone Light Show over the Penobscot River in Bangor/Brewer on Sunday, August 2 at 8:45 p.m. Grab your lawn chairs and cameras, get to your viewing spot along the Bangor and Brewer riverwalks and get ready for 10+ minutes of innovative lightworks celebrating America's 250th birthday!

Searsport

Searsport is the summer home of Big Jim! This iconic billboard statue was originally erected in homage to Maine's former, and lucrative, sardine industry. It is now alongside Route 1, taking up position in Searsport in front of the Penobscot Marine Museum for the summer and fall of 2026.

More than 66 years ago, the 40-foot-tall fisherman, outfitted in sou'wester gear, stood sentry in Kittery near the edge of the Piscataqua River, which divides New Hampshire from Maine. Traffic streaming north over the "old bridge" (the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge) along Route 1 from 1959 and through the late 1960s, would be met by the fisherman presiding over the landscape, and everyone would then know they were firmly in Maine.

The Big Jim statue then was relocated Down East to Prospect Harbor for 60 years, to Stinson Seafood. Now the Penobscot Marine Museum is restoring it. Big Jim will eventually return to Prospect Harbor, a tribute to the hardworking people who powered Maine's coastal economy.

The Penobscot Maritime Museum welcomes guests to their new exhibit, *Sardineland,* Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Visit the maritime communities affected by the boom and bust of Maine's sardine industry and herring fishery. They have gathered stories from those who worked in canneries, fished for herring, and continue to live and work in these coastal communities. *Sardineland* tells their stories alongside photographs and tools of the trade to explore the industry's ongoing impact on those who handled the herring—from the net to the can. Visit the museum's huge campus to raise a sail, read a seaman's diary, sing a sea chantey. Voyage through hundreds of years, thousands of miles, and millions of stories in art, objects, photos, and hands-on exhibits.

The town of Searsport is celebrating its 180th birthday in 2026. Marking America's 250th birthday makes this year's celebration even more special.

Can't make it this week? You can tour the historic towns along the 4-Port Loop anytime! A cell phone app will guide travelers through the key historical sites, public access and viewing sites along the 4-Port Loop. Download the app at www.4portloop.stqry.app. It is accessible whether you are traveling by car, boat, bike or on foot. It is perfect for packing a picnic and taking the family on a drive through the hidden treasures of the Lower Penobscot River basin. The app can be used anytime and year-round.

The mission of the Penobscot Maritime Heritage Association is to provide an historical perspective of the Penobscot River Basin utilizing the collective energy of its citizens to create educational programs which expand awareness of tourism opportunities in coastal Maine and draw attention to the contemporary enterprises that drive the economies of our towns. The Penobscot Maritime Heritage Association helps promote the 14 historical ports of the lower Penobscot River Basin: Bangor, Brewer, Bucksport, Castine, Frankfort, Hampden, Orland, Orrington, Penobscot, Prospect, Searsport, Stockton Springs, Verona Island and Winterport.

For more information, visit www.penobscotmaritimeheritage.com and www.4portloop.me.

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Harvey Gamage

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Tuiga

Viola

Notre Dame Des Flots

Presumpscot & Merrymeeting II Whitby Pilot Gigs

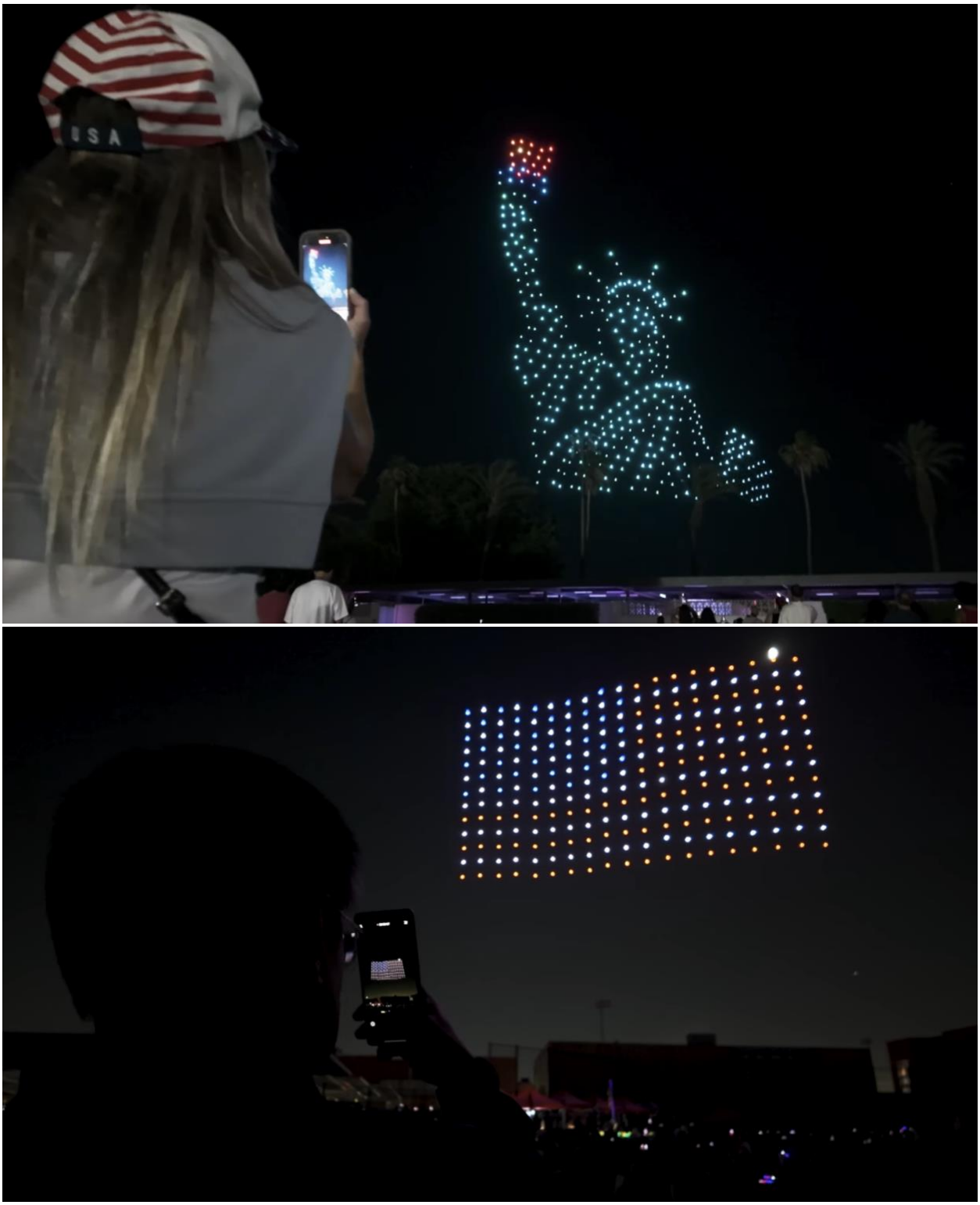
The State of Maine

Students aboard a Sailing Ships Maine training vessel

Penobscot Expedition of 1779

Ken Hendrickson's historical paintings

Newly Restored "Big Jim" in Searsport



Drone Show in Bucksport and Bangor/Brewer