



University of
Southern Maine

American & New England Studies

Student Research Panel • Thursday, April 16, 2009 • 5:00 p.m.

Todd Nicholson

Swashbuckling Middle-Class Guys: Myth and Reality in the Nineteenth-Century Merchant Marine

Using thirty years of collected correspondence between a nineteenth-century, Freeport ship captain and his wife, this thesis examines the precedence that the romantic appeal of foreign ports and exotic adventures has taken over the realities and hardships of life at sea. A primary source is the personal and business correspondence of Captain John Griffin Dillingham (1808-1869) of Freeport, Maine and secondary sources are various histories and interpretations of the nineteenth-century U.S. merchant marine. In three chapters this thesis explores shipbuilding and ship manning in Freeport, considers the personal topics found in the correspondence between John and his wife Margaret and finally interrogates the business practices and economic structures of the mid-nineteenth-century merchant marine.

Donna Damon

CREATION OF THE SUMMER NATIVE: UNDERSTANDING TOURISM ON GREAT CHEBEAGUE ISLAND

The thesis delves into the history, economy, built environment and culture of Great Chebeague Island and examines and analyzes how the islanders initially responded to tourism and how their responses changed over time and uses a myriad of sources from architecture to tourist brochures. The essential question of the thesis is: How did/do islanders, who are frequently stereotyped as being insulated and independent, adapt to the annual influx of summer people? The presentation will include a discussion of source materials as well as an overview of each thesis chapter.

Michelle Smith

“But we’ve always been poor”

Poverty and the New England Character, 1880-1915

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century America, the highly contested issue of poverty dominated public debates. I will discuss the relationship of this new concern about poverty to the discourse of regional identity and New England character in selected fiction and nonfiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Glickman Library Rm 423-424

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