



ORLEANS HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

OrleansHistoricalSociety.org
3 River Road, P.O. Box 353, Orleans, MA 02653
508-240-1329

By bringing history and culture to life, the Orleans Historical Society will inspire a shared sense of community and pride in the rich heritage of the Town of Orleans.

SUMMER 2016

ARCHITECTS CHOSEN TO ADVISE OHS ON HERITAGE CENTER DESIGN

Two local architects have been selected to advise the Orleans Historical Society (OHS) on design and site planning for its Heritage Center on River Road, adjacent to its current 1834 Meetinghouse. Peter Haig of AD Architects in Orleans will provide overall building and site design work, and Dave Hawk of Hawk Designs in Sandwich will assist with land-use planning.

“We are very excited to have these professionals working with us on this project,” said OHS Board Chairman Mark Carron. “Peter has extensive experience in building design and site planning while Dave, who lives in Orleans, has an impressive track record of private and commercial projects completed on the Cape. They will help us determine the best use of the land and buildings we have now, plus what historic and/or new structures can be accommodated on the adjacent Town land we are intending to lease. OHS must have room to grow in order to fulfill its mission of preserving the rich heritage of Orleans well into the future.”

Carron added that important progress is being made in negotiating a long-term lease of the former American Legion property, currently a parking lot adjacent to the OHS Meetinghouse, owned by the Town. “We are grateful for the Town’s support authorizing the Selectmen to negotiate a lease with us, but the 99-year span we are seeking requires final approval from the Commonwealth. House Bill 3664 is pending before the state legislature and we expect that it will be approved soon, with the support of our Cape Representatives.”

Complicating the Heritage Center planning is the Town’s need for a portion of the parking lot for temporary offices during the building of a new police station. For

an interim period, likely 3-5 years, OHS has designated a smaller portion of the parking lot for its immediate use. This use could incorporate the proposed expansion of the existing Meetinghouse and the relocation and remodeling of the Hurd Chapel to create more usable space, as announced in the Autumn, 2015 OHS Newsletter.

“Also there could be room in this smaller portion of the parking lot to preserve a historic building,” Carron explained. “While our plans to purchase the Sparrow property fell through, we are always considering other properties along with the opportunity for new construction. There are a lot of moving parts, and our architects will be looking at all of them to see what makes the most sense for the Town and our organization.”

Meanwhile, OHS is working on multiple fronts to address current and future funding needs. The Orleans Community Preservation Commission has provided valuable support and we are continuing to seek out any and all available grant funding opportunities, Carron said. Another critical part of our planning is a capital campaign, and we are interviewing professionals who can help us. Key to that effort will be our ability to communicate our Heritage Center vision to the community and other constituents, and the plans and models our architects develop will help us do that. We look forward to their ideas and recommendations later this year, Carron added.

OHS announced in 2015 its Heritage Center concept for creating a historically appropriate setting of multiple buildings where current and future artifacts could be preserved and displayed, and cultural events could be held for the convenience of Orleans residents and visitors.

BELGIANS VISIT CG36500, OHS



More than 30 Belgian student athletes and their coaches visited the CG36500 lifeboat and the Orleans Historical Society Meetinghouse in early April. They were sponsored by Cape Cod Sports Ambassadors, Inc., a non-profit organization composed of parents and community members who have organized cultural/educational exchange trips with other countries since 1968. The students and coaches spent 10 days on the Cape.

Letter from the Executive Director

Summer 2016

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My first six months at OHS have gone quickly, and I want to share with you some things I have learned serving as your Executive Director.

OHS Board members are dedicated to the organization. Their work ranges from planning our Heritage Center and restoring the CG36500 to working with school students, creating programs, promoting our events, and helping to raise money. They are experts in many subjects, and they do their jobs enthusiastically and with passion for the work.

People in the community are generous in supporting us. Our Annual Appeal generated more than \$15,000, thanks to many donors (see next page), and the Membership Drive is under way (please return the renewal form mailed to you). Also, Charles and Sandy Terrell recently donated 19th century furniture from the H.K. Cummings family, and Claudia Reeder and Tom Bossert donated an 1876 coal-burning stove from a Main Street house.

Thanks to long-time and new volunteers, amazing things happen. All the names are too many to list, but I would especially like to thank Kaeza Fearn, designer of this newsletter and technology-consultant extraordinaire, and new volunteer Dave Drabkin, who is enthusiastically updating our exhibitions. Thanks also to Nauset Marine who haul the CG36500 wherever it travels by land, and to our volunteers who maintain the boat and serve as crew and guides.

People from across the country and the world are interested in the CG36500. The boat was visited by a Belgian school group, several active and retired members of the Coast Guard and numerous off-season tourists from as far away as England. Also visiting was a young boy from New Hampshire whose entire 5th grade had read *The Finest Hours*, a 90+-year-old visitor who came with his caregiver, and descendants of both CG36500 and Pendleton crew members.

We partner with many other non-profit organizations. Again, there are too many to name them all, but I have enjoyed meeting and working with people from the Orleans Community Partnership, Firebirds Baseball, Orleans Chamber of Commerce, French Cable Station Museum, Cape Cod Museum Trail, and the Coast Guard Heritage Museum. Thanks to all, and apologies to those I haven't mentioned by name.

There is no such thing as a quiet day, and no two days are alike. Even on the grayest winter day, something was always happening at the Meetinghouse. Visitors, volunteers, Board and OHS members called, e-mailed or stopped by to visit. Each day I started out with a to-do list and goals I hoped to achieve, but I never knew what surprises awaited. A visitor with a story about early Orleans or a connection to the CG36500 can make my day.

Every cloud has a silver lining. It is never good news to hear that someone has passed away, but we are grateful to the families of CG36500 volunteer Bob Bohlin, and life-long resident John Randall Mayo for asking that memorial donations be made to OHS. We also were surprised by a generous bequest from a local resident who few of us knew personally, but loved history and passed by our Meetinghouse on her daily walks around town.

It is going to be an exciting summer – and it's just around the corner! Check out our upcoming events (page 5). There's a special CG36500 exhibition at the Meetinghouse, several of our lectures will focus on maritime history, and we have our lineup of evening lectures and concerts, walking tours and, of course, our Antiques Show on June 18. The boat is back at Rock Harbor where, this year, we will have a Souvenir Shop selling boat-related items.

I hope all of you have a wonderful summer. Please come and visit us at the Meetinghouse or Rock Harbor!

Gail Nessell Colglazier

HONOR ROLL OF OUR ANNUAL APPEAL CONTRIBUTORS

More than 250 Orleans Historical Society members, friends and neighbors responded to our 2016 Annual Appeal letter this spring. **THANK YOU** to everyone on the list below for their support.

Not on the list? It's not too late to support OHS; contributions may be made online at OrleansHistoricalSociety.org or by check mailed to P.O. Box 353, Orleans MA, 02653.

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Academy Place is Site of Former School for Higher Learning

by Ron Petersen

History is a highly perishable commodity – once it's gone, it's gone for good. As generations pass, artifacts disappear, documents disintegrate, and memories fade, we lose a bit of our heritage and culture one step at a time.

In Orleans, a group of citizens stepped up to help preserve our heritage by forming the Orleans Historical Marker Committee, and the Orleans Historical Society is a part of that effort. The committee represents a diverse mix of residents and local organizations, and is operating under grants from the town via the Community Preservation Committee, obtained by the Orleans Community Partnership.

The Historical Marker Committee plans to research, design, and install a series of interpretive markers throughout town that commemorate important people, places, and events. The first four have been completed and are set to be installed before summer at the site of the railroad depot, Academy Place, the Old Methodist Cemetery and adjoining Old Post Office, and the Old Firehouse.

One of these locations, Academy Place is a small, unassuming triangle of land at the junction of Main St. and Rt. 28. Many of us drive by it several times a day, often without a second thought. Actually, this spot is rich with our history and heritage, and illuminates the intertwined and very special relationship between Orleans and the sea.

In 1827, when our town was only 30 years old, a group of private citizens wanted to establish a place of higher learning, as only elementary education was provided at the time. Thus, the institution known both as Rock Harbor Academy and Orleans Academy was born. The proprietors hired teachers qualified to instruct students who had passed through the public schools in subjects such as navigation, Spanish, French, and mathematics. In addition, young men with seaman's ratings would study here in the hopes of earning an officer's berth. Besides preparing students for a seafaring career, the school also trained teachers for the town's public schools.

The Reverend Enoch Pratt, in his 1844 history of the town, praised the school by writing, "This institution has been of great importance to those engaged in seafaring pursuits, in furnishing them with instruction necessary to the prosecution of their business, as well as to others of both sexes who remain at home. Many have been qualified as teachers and have taken charge of the town schools."

The Academy structure consisted of two stories, with a classroom on the first floor and an assembly room on the second. When the Academy was discontinued circa 1854, the building was moved to River Road where it still stands as a private residence.

An example of a stand-out alumnus was Captain Joseph D. Taylor, who became famous as a Boston builder of record-setting clipper ships. Taylor retired to his Orleans home, which is now the Barley Neck Inn.

The same patch of land that housed Rock Harbor Academy also became home to the Snow Library in 1877. Watch for that story in a future column.



Rock Harbor Academy site viewed from Main St. toward Rte. 28 (left) and Academy Place (right).

SUMMER EVENTS

Summer OHS Events - For more information: www.OrleansHistoricalSociety.org or 508 240-1329

- June - Sept **Orleans Historical Society Museum open** 9-12 and 1-4 Tuesdays and Wednesdays.
Please check website for expanded summer hours. 3 River Road. Exhibits on the history of the town and on the historic Lifeboat CG36500, focus of Disney movie *The Finest Hours*.
Famed Lifeboat CG 36500, owned by Orleans Historical Society, docked at Rock Harbor. **“Talk and Tours”** with boat volunteers Saturdays & Sundays 1 – 3 (July through Labor Day weekend).
- June 18 **4th Annual Antiques Show, sponsored by Orleans Historical Society.**
On the green at Nauset Middle School, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (rain or shine).
- June 18 – 19 **Yarmouth Minutemen Encampment** Orleans Village Green.
- June 22 **Talk and book signing by author Bill Russo, speaking about his new book, *Ghosts of Cape Cod*.** At the OHS Meetinghouse.
- June 24 **Historic Cemetery Walk with historian Bonnie Snow.** 10 a.m.
Meet at the OHS Meetinghouse.
- July 6 **Talk by historian Don Wilding, *Shipwrecks of Cape Cod*.** At the OHS Meetinghouse.
- July 8 **Historic Main Street Walk with historian Bonnie Snow.** 10 a.m.
Meet at the OHS Meetinghouse.
- July 20 **Talk by Arthur Milmore, *And the Sea Shall Have Them All: The Wreck of the Steamer Portland*.** At the OHS Meetinghouse.
- July 22 **Historic Cemetery Walk with historian Bonnie Snow.**
10 a.m. Meet at the OHS Meetinghouse.
- August 3 **Talk by Curtis Martin, *American Whaling in the Age of Sail*.** At the OHS Meetinghouse.
- August 5 **Historic Main Street Walk with historian Bonnie Snow.**
10 a.m. Meet at the OHS Meetinghouse.
- August 19 **Historic Cemetery Walk with historian Bonnie Snow.**
10 a.m. Meet at the OHS Meetinghouse.
- August 31 **Talk by John Cumbler *Cape Cod: An Environmental History of a Fragile Ecosystem*.** At OHS Meetinghouse.
- Sept 16 **Historic Main Street Walk with historian Bonnie Snow.**
10 a.m. Meet at the OHS Meetinghouse.



WISH LIST

Can you help by funding or providing these items urgently needed by the Orleans Historical Society? Your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Please call the OHS at 508-240-1329.

- Digital camera to take photos of museum events
- Laminating machine for making signs
- Mat cutter for exhibit labels and for matting and framing images
- Garage space for storage

OHS BOOTH AT ROCK HARBOR

Along with the CG36500 lifeboat, OHS will have a souvenir and information booth at Rock Harbor this summer, courtesy of a donation by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ryder of Eastham. The 6- by 8-foot booth in the southwest corner of the parking lot will be staffed Thursdays through Sundays from 12- 4, July 2 through Labor Day (other times by chance). Visitors may buy T-shirts, burgees, books and other boat-related items and can obtain additional information about the lifeboat’s history and “Talk & Tour” schedule.



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ANTIQUES EXTRAVAGANZA!

On **Saturday, June 18**, OHS is holding its 4th annual Antiques Show on the front lawn of Nauset Middle School. This yearly spring event is one of the premier antique shows on the Cape. More than 30 quality dealers from both on- and off-Cape will be featured, specializing in Nautical items, scrimshaw, country furniture and smalls, stoneware, antique and pre-loved books, vintage glassware and pottery, early lamps, paintings and much, much more. The show will run from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and admission is **\$5 with coupon (right)**. All proceeds benefit the non-profit Orleans Historical Society.

ORLEANS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Antiques Show
on Cape Cod
Saturday, June 18, 2016
9 am to 3:30 pm (rain or shine)



30+ quality dealers
Admission \$6
\$5 per person with col. student and child care free
On the Green at Nauset Middle School
Route 28 or Edridge Park Way
Orleans, MA 02653
508-240-1329
www.OrleansHistoricalSociety.org
Proceeds benefit Orleans Historical Society, a nonprofit organization.