



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.

SPRING 2015

Postal Patron

Orleans Historical Society Unveils Multi-Phase Plan for Town Historical/Cultural 'Heritage Center'

The Orleans Historical Society (OHS) has unveiled a multi-phase plan that would create a convenient and historically appropriate heritage center for Orleans residents and visitors. The center would include the existing 1834 Meeting House and Hurd Chapel, plus other historical buildings that could be moved to the OHS site on Main Street and River Road for exhibits and preservation of important artifacts and archives.

discussing the lease or sale of town-owned property adjacent to the Meeting House, and possibly moving a circa 1800 barn and 1880 house (both currently empty) to that location. These buildings, conveniently clustered together, would provide much-needed space for the proper preservation and public display of Orleans historic items well into the future.



Albert Bassett house, 116 Cranberry Highway

"We want to study the feasibility of creating a setting in the original center of town where current and future historic artifacts and archives can be preserved and displayed properly, and where all types of cultural events can be held for the benefit of everyone," said OHS Board Chair Mark Carron. "We currently find ourselves having to decline gifted artifacts or proposed cultural events due to the lack of proper space or facilities. Each time this happens, the town loses yet another piece of its rich heritage."



Sparrow Barn, MA-28/So. Orleans Rd
Photo by Bob Wilkinson

The Orleans Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has recommended a \$20,000 grant for our feasibility study. "We will be working closely with the CPC to present our plan to Orleans residents at the 2015 Annual Town Meeting," Carron said. Depending on how we proceed, major funding for the heritage center could come from private donations and grants, he added.

Since 1958 the Orleans Historical Society has been dedicated to preserving the Town's heri-

itage, respecting its past, and making its history and culture available to both residents and visitors. The Society also is a strong advocate for positive change and cultural growth consistent with the Town's history and natural beauty. Its museum and offices are located in an 1834 Meeting House on the corner of Main Street and River Road.

Thanks to the support of OHS members and the community, enhancements to the Meeting House are being made that will make more educational and cultural programs available to the public, Carron said. Future plan phases could include

Battle of Rock Harbor



The wildly successful exhibit of "Battle of Rock Harbor" shadow-boxes and the accompanying "Diary" entries created by the OES 5th graders was held over for an additional month at the Town Hall Skaket Room. (You may recall the exhibit was moved to make way for our new septic installation in December.)

We look forward to another collaborative exhibition next December and thank the Cape Cod Five bank and the Orleans Cultural Council for their support.

SPRING MUSIC CONCERTS AT THE MUSEUM

Our Music at the Museum series of solo and ensemble concerts continues this spring with five events featuring highly accomplished artists in the intimate setting of our recently updated Meeting House. Tickets are \$20 each, and may be purchased in advance using PayPal or with cash/check at the OHS Museum weekday mornings.

- Friday, March 6, 7:30 pm - Pianist Alon Goldstein** returns with a varied program of works by Janacek, Debussy, Liszt and Schubert (Sponsored by the Russell-Davidson Foundation)
- Sunday, April 26, 4:00 pm - Pianist Paul Orgel** performs music by Schubert, Beethoven, Dvorak, Chopin, and the Holocaust composer Viktor Ullmann.
- Saturday, May 16, 7:30 pm - Pianist Benjamin Hochman** will offer a program including two Beethoven sonatas and Brahms' "Handel Variations." (Sponsored by the Russell-Davidson Foundation)
- Sunday, May 31, 4:00 pm - Bart Weisman and Friends:** jazz concert with Cercie Miller, sax; Tim Ray, piano; Ron Ormsby, bass; and Bart Weisman, drums.
- Sunday, June 14, 4:00 pm - The Cape Cod chamber trio "I Musicisti"** will present a varied program of works for voice, clarinet and piano by Brahms, Spohr, and Poulenc.

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Chairman's Letter

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Spring 2015

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Thanks to our local news media, we have received very good press relating to our proposed expansion plans to create a "heritage center" in Orleans. So, let me provide some background. Through the efforts of our Building and Strategic Planning Committees, we have developed a two-phase approach to our expansion. Phase I is an addition to the Meeting House; Phase II is the construction of a new Museum, office and storage for our artifacts.

For Phase I, the Building Committee has developed a preliminary floor and site plan (see site plan on orleanshistoricalsociety.org, click on "site plan"). The addition to the Meeting House (at the end facing downtown) would create handicap restrooms, handicap access, and some much-needed space. In preparation for this addition, we recently upgraded our septic system to a Title 5. Our expansion falls outside the required setback, so we will be approaching the town for a variance, requiring us to go before the Board of Appeals. Without a variance we will not be able to expand. With the variance we will begin to seek an architect who will work with us to design and determine the cost of Phase I, after which we will begin our fund-raising.

While we had hoped to have Phase I well underway before we started Phase II, current events and opportunities to save two historic structures may result in us proceeding with both phases in tandem. To determine if either, or both, of these structures could be adapted to fit our needs for Phase II, the Orleans Community Preservation Committee has recommended a grant for a feasibility study. However, there are lots of moving parts to this phase that must fall into place for us to move forward. The Board feels, in keeping with our mission to preserve the town's heritage, that we should at least try to incorporate one or both of these historic buildings in our expansion plans and save these structures.

Meanwhile, we are continuing our discussions with the town to obtain some of their property -- the parking lot next to the American Legion Hall and adjacent to our Meeting House. The acquisition (or long-term lease) of this property would enable us to create our "heritage center" by providing the needed acreage for the new Museum. We had hoped to start Phase II in a few years, but the offer by each owner to donate their structure to the Historical Society might change that timeline. However, the Board will not proceed unless the overall benefits and funding support our plans.

Meanwhile, the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board is helping to keep us focused -- not only on our expansion plans, but also our key operations. We've standardized our logo and mission statement, which will better identify us going forward. We have also redrafted our Orleans Historical Society brochure to better reflect our programs and important role in the community -- so be sure to pick one up during your next visit. Finally, the Board / Strategic Planning Committee will be overseeing our 2015 membership drive as we continue to enhance the benefits and value of your membership. We ask that you encourage your friends and neighbors to join the Society so that they, too, can better enjoy and help preserve our Orleans heritage. I, along with the Board, look forward to seeing each of you at an event in the coming weeks and months.

In closing, I'm sure you have read how difficult it is for non-profits to obtain and retain volunteers, and we are no different. We are constantly looking for folks to help with tasks or projects -- some are one-time shots while others might take a month or two to complete. So please volunteer -- I'll guarantee you'll find it fulfilling or I'll buy you a lunch. Also, some important Board seats are open and if you are interested, please contact me or another Board member.

As always, thanks for allowing me to be your Chairman,
Mark E. Carron

Time to Renew Your Membership

Thank you for being a valued member of the Orleans Historical Society, and helping us fulfill our mission to bring history and culture to life. By renewing your membership for 2015, you will be a part of some very exciting activities and events including:

- Preserving and displaying our CG36500 lifeboat--the focus of a Disney film in production, "The Finest Hours," about the daring rescue of 32 men from a sinking tanker in 1952;
- A continuing series of solo and ensemble concerts featuring highly accomplished artists in the intimate setting of our recently updated Meeting House;
- A railroad exhibit and events commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first train to Orleans in December, 1865;
- An extensive series of historical tours, walks and interactive presentations about the rich heritage and culture of Orleans and the surrounding area.

Your membership dollars will enable OHS to present and expand these and other programs to the community, and to continue our important work in preserving and displaying the thousands of local artifacts and archives entrusted to our care. Also, as Orleans focuses on its future, your Society will be a positive contributor and a strong advocate for change and cultural growth that reflect the Town's history.

As an OHS member, you will receive a new monthly bulletin providing details about upcoming events and exhibits. You also will get a personalized membership card that, when presented, entitles you to discounts on event tickets and merchandise sold at the Meeting House Museum and at the CG36500 dock at Rock Harbor during the summer.

Renewal letters will be mailed to past members with more information. Or, you may complete the form below and mail it to OHS with your payment. Thank you.

Not Yet A Member?

We would love you to become a member if you are not already. Simply return the bottom portion of this page with your payment or use our PayPal service.



MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORLEANS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Name(s) _____
 Address _____
 Winter address and dates _____
 Telephone _____ Email _____
 Date _____ Amount enclosed _____

A family membership includes two adults in household plus children under 18.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Dues for the current year

You can now make your payment directly from our website using PayPal.



orleanshistoricalsociety.org

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Family</u>
Sponsor	\$25	\$40
Sustaining	\$50	\$100
Benefactor	\$100	\$200
Life	\$500	
Special gift/donation	\$_____	

Clip and mail this portion with your check payable to the Orleans Historical Society.
PO Box 353 Orleans, MA 02653

Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

March 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 March 1927 Schooner <i>Montclair</i> grounded on Nauset Beach near Orleans Coast Guard Station.	5	6 Alon Goldstein Piano Concert 7:30 pm	7
8	9	10		12	15	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 March 1984 Eldia freighter blown ashore in East Orleans.		31				

April 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 2 April 1852 Captain Thomas Knowles dies at San Francisco after a 138 day voyage from Boston. Aged 29 years.	3	4	
5	6	7	8	10	11 Operetta Auditions! Girl from Quanset 2:00 - 4:00 pm	
12	13	14	A great way to hear about events, announcements and fun historical tidbits! Like Us On facebook follow us on twitter		16	17
19	20	21	23	24	25	
26 Paul Orgel Piano Concert 4:00 pm	27	28				

May 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		All month, M - F, 9:00a - 12:00p Cape Cod Maritime Days Orleans Life-saving Station, MLB CG36500, Ship Models			1	2
3	4	5 May 1893 Sale of the town school to the I.O.O.F. Hall	6	7	8	9
10	11		13	14	15	16 Benjamin Hochman Piano Concert 7:30 pm
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	31 Bart Weisman and Friends Jazz Concert 4:00 pm	26	27 May 2005 Motor Lifeboat CG36500 National Register of Historic Places certificate.	28	29	30 May 1883 Dedication of Soldiers Monument across from Town Hall

* Italicized calendar notations are drawn from OHS archives.

The Life-Saving Heritage of Orleans
Part 2 - The Coast Guard years

Ron Petersen

Our members and friends will recall that OHS paid tribute to the life-saving heritage of Orleans in 2014. We began with Cape Cod's first shipwreck, which occurred off the waters of what became Orleans, and carried it through the end of the United States Life-saving Service when it became part of the newly established US Coast Guard in 1915. We chronicled the wreck of the *Sparrowhawk* in 1626, traced the noble lifesaving endeavors of the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and concluded with the years of the USLSS Life-saving Station in Orleans from 1872 to 1915. We met numerous courageous and notable individuals, including Orleans resident Benjamin Sparrow, who served as District Superintendent for the USLSS for the entire Cape. We also met the Station Keepers, Solomon Linnell, Marcus Pierce, and James Charles. We pick up the story with the one-hundred-year birthday of the US Coast Guard.



U.S. Coast Guard Station No. 40, Orleans

On January 28, 1915, President Woodrow Wilson signed the law creating the US Coast Guard by combining the USLSS and the Revenue Cutter Service. One of the principle architects of this change was Sumner Kimball, the founder of the original USLSS. Readers may recall that Kimball, before his rise to high Federal office, once taught school in Orleans. The new law placed the Coast Guard under the Treasury Department in peacetime and under the Navy during wartime or at the direction of the President.

Initially, the new service left the organizations of the two components in place. The life-saving stations were still organized in the same districts, with Orleans being renamed Station 40. As to the surfmen assigned to the stations, they were now in the military service, with new ranks, rates, and pay scales. While they were now subject to transfer, most remained at their old stations. District Superintendents became commissioned officers, Station Keepers became warrant officers, and surfmen became enlisted Coast Guardsmen, though they would be known as "sand pounders" by their seagoing counterparts. All were now eligible for military retirement, and some of the

veteran lifesavers took advantage of this.

In addition to this organizational change, a number of other changes were in the wind that would change the face of life-saving, but not the bravery, fortitude, and determination of those who engaged in it. These changes were brought about through technology and improvements in navigation.

One of these changes was the introduction of the motor lifeboat. The Chatham Old Harbor Station was the first on the Cape to receive one, a 26-foot Monomoy Surfboat, the nautical ancestor of the OHS' own CG36500. Since it was more practical to moor these boats than to launch them over the beach, it marked a big change in the way the Coast Guard went about the life-saving business. The development of the two-way radio and aviation also brought about marked changes.

The opening of the Cape Cod Canal in 1914 marked another significant influence on life-saving operations in Orleans. The concept behind the canal was to provide a safe and secure passage for East Coast shipping, avoiding the treacherous waters to the east of the lower Cape. The initial canal in 1914 was a private enterprise, charging a substantial toll for passage. However, the US Government took over the Canal during World War I, and after widening it and removing the toll, the Canal diverted much of the shipping traffic away from our dangerous waters.

The most dramatic life-saving event during the Coast Guard years occurred on July 21, 1918 when a German U-Boat surfaced and began shelling the tug *Perth Amboy* and its four barges in tow. (As the U-Boat also shelled the Orleans coast, our town became the only spot in the US to be attacked during World War I.) On the morning of July 21, Keeper Robert Pierce was on duty as usual. He had been in the USLSS since 1890, and was now 52 years old. Now a Coast Guardsman, he had just taken command of Station 40 in February. Pierce saw the attack developing, recognized that mariners were in danger and, like many before

Continued on next page...

Life-saving Heritage continued ...

him, ordered the lifeboat launched and led the rescue himself. The only difference this time was that it was launched amid intense enemy fire. The day gave new meaning to the lifesavers' unofficial motto, "You have to go out- you don't have to come back." As the lifeboat approached the tug and barges, the concussion from the U-156's deck guns blew the hats off the heads of several surfmen. Pierce's boat met the lifeboat of the *Perth Amboy's* crew, and Surfman #1, Bill Moore, transferred to it to render first aid to two wounded crewmen. Doctors later credited Moore's actions with saving the arm of one of the men. There will be much more on this event from the Orleans Historical Society as the 100-year commemoration of the 'Attack on Orleans' approaches in 2018.

The Orleans Life-saving Station no longer exists. One of the original nine stations erected by the USLSS in



Orleans USCG Station No. 40 crew

1872, it was located on what was originally called Ponchet Island, back of Nauset Beach about 2.5 miles south of Nauset Harbor and about five miles from Orleans Village. Operations at Station 40 were discontinued in 1922, undoubtedly due to the technological changes described above. It was again listed as active in 1928, and Public Works Administration funds were used to rebuild it in 1933. It disappears from the list of active stations in 1947. The property was turned over to the General Services Administration in 1954, and to the National Park Service in 1970.

No active life-saving operations remain in Orleans today. However, the character, dedication, courage, and fortitude of those who risked their lives for the survival and safety of those at sea remains a strong pillar in the heritage of our town.

Stay tuned to OHS this summer for more.

Battle of Rock Harbor 200th Anniversary Commemoration

On Friday, Dec 19, the OHS gathered with others to commemorate Orleans' famous battle during the War of 1812 when a local militia group fought back against the British Navy who were attempting to extort, burn and steal private possessions from Orleans citizens.

An historic information panel created by the OHS now marks the location of the battle to tell the story well into the future.


Participants included Historian Bonnie Snow and Board Member Ron Petersen, Selectman Dave Dunford, the Orleans Police Honor Guard, NRMS bugler Liam Lawless, the Yarmouth Minutemen and the bell ringers at Orleans churches. Thank you to all who attended!



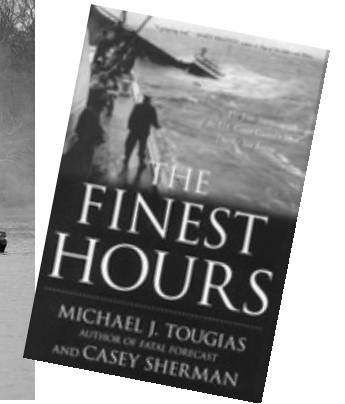
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 **Motor Lifeboat CG 36500**
CG36500.org

Summer berth, Rock Harbor, Orleans, MA
Winter berth, Nauset Marine East, Orleans, MA



"Finest Hours" to debut earlier

By Wicked Local staff reports
Posted Jan. 24, 2015 at 9:00 AM

"Finest Hours" fans will have to wait quite a few hours less to catch the Coast Guard thriller as Disney Studios has moved the release date to Oct. 9.

The movie, based on the nail-biting 1952 *Pendleton* rescue, was slated for an April 2016 release date, but it was announced it was to swap its debut with a remake of "The Jungle Book," a family movie.

Cast and crew from "The Finest Hours" spent just over a week in town [Chatham] this past December shooting scenes depicting what has been called the "greatest small boat rescue in Coast Guard history."

The movie, with Chris Pine as the lead, tells the story of Guardsman Bernie Webber and his crew heading out in a February gale in the CG36500. Despite seas the size of small buildings and frigid temperatures, the crew on the 36-foot wooden boat saved 32 men on the stern of the tanker *Pendleton*, which had broken apart in the storm and was sinking. A few stars did get a ride on the 36500, which was not in the movie, when they visited Chatham. The boat, which was rescued and restored through the efforts of the Orleans Historical Society, is on the National Register of Historic Places and still plies the waters of the Cape.

<http://orleans.wickedlocal.com/article/20150123/NEWS/150128115/0/>

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CG36500 Winter Storage and Upkeep

For the CG36500, winter storage and upkeep is pretty unusual because of the construction of the boat. It is built of cypress wood and bent oak frames, but has Monel sheathing on the hull which protects it from ice damage. In fact, it was used back in Chatham for ice breaking at the Fish Pier back in the 50's! The water is a natural cradle for it, much better than several pressure points on the wood hull if it is out of the water. And, Nauset Marine East maintains a bubbler system that keeps ice from pulling the pilings out at the docks. We could get underway at any time if needed. I don't anticipate that!

We have seven volunteers that take turns checking on the boat daily, clear it of ice and snow, ensure that the engine block heater is working, check the dock lines, check the bilge, etc. Needless to say, the CG36500 is in good hands despite the hard winter.

Richard G. Ryder, Coxswain
Operations Manager, Motor Lifeboat CG36500

