



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.*

WINTER 2015

GAIL COLGLAZIER TO JOIN OHS AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Orleans Historical Society is pleased to welcome its new Executive Director, Gail Nessell Colglazier, who will join us on January 1, 2016. She brings some 19 years of museum leadership experience, including 14 as director of local historical societies and historic sites. In addition, she has served as President of the New England Museum Association (NEMA) and has worked in key roles at other history and arts organizations at the state and national levels.



“Gail is joining us at a critical time when our Society is expanding and becoming more active in the community,” said Board Chair Mark Carron. “We are very excited to have her broad expertise and extensive background to help guide us in achieving our mission and implementing our Heritage Center plans in the years ahead. To start, Gail will be working part-time at OHS, but the position could grow to full-time as budget allows.”

“I am looking forward to joining OHS and being in Orleans full time,” Colglazier said. “This is an exciting time for the organization. I’m eager to help OHS grow and expand its role in the community, and I am thrilled to be here. My parents built their house in East Orleans when I was six months old and wherever I have lived, I keep coming back. It’s a great community with an interesting history.”

Before coming to OHS, Gail was a consultant in Londonderry, New Hampshire, where she conducted executive searches at Museum Search and Reference, a firm that places directors and other leaders in museums around the country. Previously, she was Executive Director of the American Independence Museum in Exeter (NH), and the Manchester (NH) Historic Association (historical society). Earlier, she was Director of Museums at the Springfield Library and Museums, and the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum, both in Massachusetts.

Gail earned a bachelor’s degree in American Studies at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA, and a master’s degree through the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture at the University of Delaware in Newark, DE. She and her husband, who worked for 28 years at Old Sturbridge Village as a museum conservator, are in the process of moving back to her family’s home in Orleans.

THANK YOU AND BEST WISHES, TAMSEN!

Tamsen Cornell, OHS Museum Director, decided to leave the organization as of November 13 to pursue other interests, according to Board Chair Mark Carron. “Tamsen has made many contributions to the growth of our organization, and as a result we are well positioned for the future,” he said. “We greatly appreciate her years of dedicated service and wish her all the best in her new endeavors.”

Chairman's Letter

Winter 2015

Board of Directors 2016

Chair
Mark Carron

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Beverly Fuller

Treasurer
John Proctor

Secretary
Kathleen McNeill

Alphabetically

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Tom Cronin

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Cheryl Eisner

Kenneth Fearn

Cristina Harter

Tish Noyes

Peter O'Meara

Richard Ryder

Bonnie Snow

Jay Stradal

Bobbie Thomsen

Executive Director
Gail Colglazier

Immediate Past President
Hank Ritchie

I know this is still 2015, yet your board is already looking towards 2016 and beyond. During this past year, we have welcomed six new board members. As new members arrived, we expressed our gratitude to three parting directors, Darwin Cornell, Ron Petersen and Sophia Fuller. Also, we want to thank Tamsen Cornell for her years of service to the Society, and wish her well in her new endeavors. Each of them has helped us establish the foundation for our future growth.

This year will go down in our history books as one of huge transition for the Historical Society. Change, as most of us realize, can be difficult. But I know deep down in my heart that the direction we are undertaking is the right approach at the right time. Five years ago when I first joined the board (thanks to Bonnie Snow), a few volunteers introduced me to some expansion plans that had been presented to the board. Even back then it was the right goal at the right time, but the organization wasn't ready.

Since then, with Society membership declining, exhibit and preservation space for artifacts maxed out, and revenue not always covering our operating expenses, the need for change is even more acute. Opportunities have never been greater for our Society to grow and be an important leader in the community, so a majority of the board has taken the following steps:

- The board has approved expansion plans under the Heritage Center concept.
- The board has approved moving forward on gaining the 99-year land lease from the Town for the parking lot adjacent to our Meeting House.
- The board re-organized by establishing 6 committees that will better focus our efforts during our expansion: Finance and Investments, Membership, Buildings and Grounds, Communications, Historic Preservation and Culture, and Executive.
- The board hired legal counsel and a CPA firm to advise us and oversee our finances.
- The board has interviewed two "Capital" fundraisers with the intent to hire one by year-end.
- Finally, and most importantly, the board has hired a part-time Executive Director, who comes to us with excellent credentials and whose family has owned a home in Orleans since the late 1950s.

At our Annual Meeting held on November 12, members were given an update on our Heritage Center plans. You can view this slide presentation via a link on the OHS website. Another presentation is planned for an informal gathering to be held at the Meeting House for those members who were unable to make our Annual Meeting.

In the exciting news category, we hope you all had an opportunity to catch the terrific feature segment on the CG36500 that appeared on *CBS This Morning* on October 17. If you missed it, it is available through a link on our website.

With Disney's *The Finest Hours* set to be released on January 29, 2016, we are gearing up to ensure we can handle the increased publicity the movie will bring to the Historical Society and the Town – not to mention the CG36500. We have found the U.S. Coast Guard to be a terrific partner in this effort and look forward to our continued joint efforts in planning publicity events.

As always, thanks for allowing me to be your Chairman,

Mark E. Carron

***DOLLAR-FOR-DOLLAR
MATCH***

Established for Piano Repairs

A generous donor has established a matching fund to pay for important repairs to the Yamaha concert grand piano that is central to most concerts at the OHS Meeting House. The grant will double every dollar contributed to this fund, up to \$1,000, through December 31.



A grand piano contains about 6,000 moving and stationary parts. Many of them require adjustment from time to time. Infrequently, some require replacement. A piano's hammers are the single most important component of its sound quality, and unfortunately, also the most expensive to replace. After 35 or so years, the hammers on our instrument are now worn to the point of requiring replacement. Repairs and re-tuning are estimated to cost between \$2,000-\$3,000 dollars.

If you have attended some of our fine concerts, you will appreciate the need to keep the piano in the best condition possible. We are most grateful for your support in attending these concerts, and hope you will consider making a small donation for these repairs.

Contributions may be made through the OHS website:

OrleansHistoricalSociety.org

or by mail to:

Orleans Historical Society
P.O. Box 353
Orleans, MA 02653.

Please indicate "Piano Fund" on your donation online or on your check. Thank you!

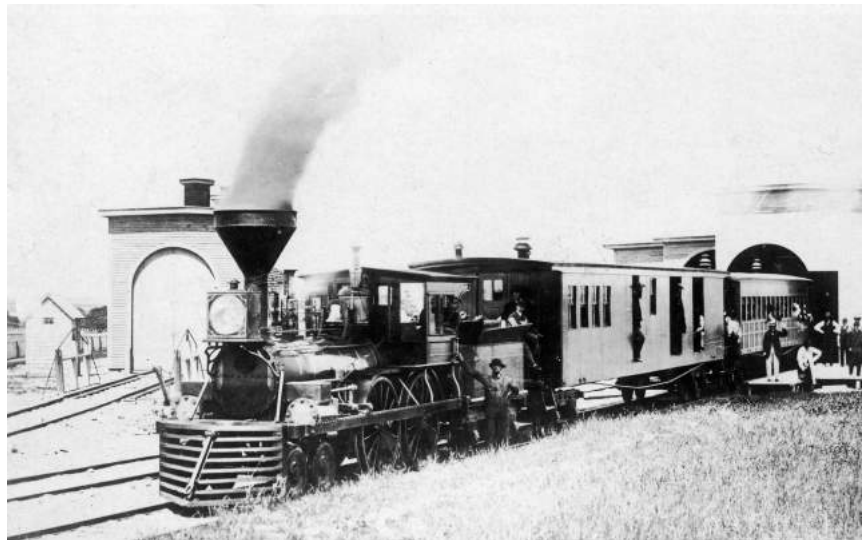
- Ken Fearn, Music Director

RAILROAD TRANSFORMED ORLEANS 150 YEARS AGO

When the first train steamed into Orleans, MA, at 11:30 a.m. on December 6, 1865, it officially opened the rail line extension from Yarmouth that would change the town forever. Orleans was now the new terminus for trainloads of people and freight from Boston and New York City. It would remain so for five years until the line was completed to Wellfleet.

Fishermen immediately liked the new railroad because they could ship their catch quickly to the big cities. The local pants factories gained a convenient way of sending merchandise to distant customers. Townspeople could now get supplies faster and cheaper by rail than by packet ships (which took seven hours to sail from Boston to Barnstable), and the two daily trains meant better and more frequent mail service.

More importantly, the railroad brought summer visitors – a new source of income for the town. In the first year of operation, nearly 54,000 people rode the trains between Yarmouth and Orleans alone, at a cost of about 90 cents each way. (Longer-distance tickets were less per mile, so a ticket from Orleans to Middleboro was \$2.10 for the 60-mile trip.) The speed of trains was limited to 20 m.p.h. including stops, so it took about one hour to travel the new railroad.



Original 1860s Orleans depot showing a train partially under its train shed (right). To the left of the locomotive's smokestack is a single-stall engine house, with the portable turntable visible in front of it.

Planning for the 19-mile, single-track Yarmouth-to-Orleans line began in the late 1850s, when Cape Cod Railroad (owner of the Middleboro-Hyannis line) asked the state legislature for a charter revision that would allow it to build beyond Hyannis. Unfortunately, the Civil War and other state priorities intervened. Growing impatient, the Cape Cod Railroad created another company, the Cape Cod Central, to get around the charter limitations. On July 4, 1864, work on the roadbed began and 17 months and \$337,647 later, the job was done.

There were several challenges to building the Cape Cod Central line, not the least of which was the bridge over Bass River. Also, there was

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RAILROAD TRANSFORMED (-cont)

the elevation from Pleasant Lake to Brewster that required the track to climb 68 feet in 1-1/4 miles. Finally there were 36 road crossings that had to be constructed.

Originally the Orleans station had a train shed over the track that protected passengers from inclement weather, but also doused them in smoke and ash from the locomotive. Across from the station on its own siding was a freight house, and behind it was a single-stall engine house with a turntable in front that could spin locomotives around for the return trip. (The turntable was “portable,” in that it moved with the railroad as it extended northward along the outer Cape.)

Early power on the Cape Cod and Cape Cod Central Railroads came from six “American-style” 4-4-0 locomotives (four pilot wheels followed by four large drivers) that used wood for fuel. Sometimes able-bodied male passengers were asked to help load wood onto the tender!

In addition to passengers, the line carried freight -- more incoming than outgoing. In 1871, total freight carried by the Cape railroads was approximately 13,000 tons of iron and other ores, 11,000 tons of less-than-carload merchandise, 6,000 tons of agricultural products (grain, flour, feed), 5,000 tons of coal, 2,000 tons of building materials (lumber, stone, brick, cement and sand), 600 tons of livestock and nearly 6,000 tons of “other” items. Going off-Cape were sand, barrels and boxes of fish, crates of textiles and, eventually, cranberries.



Early postcard showing a train at the Orleans depot, located across Old Colony Way from the current Chocolate Sparrow.

The Cape Cod Railroad bought control of the Cape Cod Central in 1868, and then merged with the Old Colony and Newport Railroad in 1873 to become the Old Colony Railroad. In 1894, the Old Colony was leased to the New York New Haven & Hartford Railroad (“New Haven”).

Regular passenger service to Orleans ended in 1938, and the last freight train passed through in the early 1960s. Yet the legacy of the Cape Cod Central/New Haven railroads lives on today. The Cape Cod Rail Trail, a famed destination for bicyclists, skateboarders and pedestrians alike, follows much of the old rail bed through Orleans and other Outer Cape towns. Defiantly, the very cars and trucks that doomed the railroad are banned from this historic route.

CG36500 DONATIONS NEARLY TRIPLE CHALLENGE GRANT

Funds raised for repairs of the CG36500 lifeboat from August 15 to October 15 were almost triple the original \$5,000 “challenge grant” made by a very generous donor in the Boston area. Some of the wood on the 70-year-old boat’s hull above the waterline was rotting and needed to be replaced. Through the kindness of many people, the repairs were recently completed by Pease Boat Works in Chatham, MA. Remaining funds will be used for ongoing restoration and maintenance of the CG36500, made famous by her rescue of 32 crew members from the broken tanker *Pendleton* during a ferocious winter storm in 1952.



THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED MAKE THESE IMPORTANT REPAIRS POSSIBLE!

Donations to the “Save the CG36500 Fund” may still be made by credit card via the OHS website, or by mail addressed to the Orleans Historical Society, P.O. Box 353, Orleans, MA 02653.

FAMED CG36500 LIFEBOAT MAKES NATIONAL TV DEBUT

The CG36500 lifeboat, restored and owned by the Orleans Historical Society, made its national television debut on *CBS This Morning* on Saturday, October 17. The nearly six-minute segment featured on-board footage and views from the top of the lighthouse in Chatham, interviews with Historical Society and U.S. Coast Guard members, and scenes from the upcoming Disney movie, *The Finest Hours*, scheduled for release in January. The segment, produced by the CBS News organization, can be viewed online at: <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/unbelievable-coast-guard-rescue/>.

Made famous by its nighttime rescue of 32 crew members from the broken tanker *Pendleton* during a raging winter storm in 1952, the CG36500 was de-commissioned by the USCG in 1968 and sat exposed to the elements until it was acquired by the Orleans Historical Society in 1981.

Following major restoration and subsequent repairs by hundreds of volunteers, made possible by many generous grants and donations, today the CG36500 is fully operational and can be viewed by the public in Orleans at Rock Harbor during the summer, and at Nauset Marine East on Meeting House Pond during the winter. She is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the four Coast Guard members involved in what has been called “the greatest small-boat rescue in Coast Guard history” received the Gold Medal lifesaving award for their bravery.

The CBS segment also included comments from Casey Sherman, co-author of the book, *The Finest Hours*, from which the script was written for a Walt Disney movie by the same name. The film dramatically portrays the *Pendleton* rescue, and is scheduled for release on January 29, 2016.

‘HERITAGE DAY’ BUILDS CIVIC PRIDE AMONG ORLEANS FIFTH-GRADERS

by Stasia Croteau

Town history and pride were key lessons learned by some 40 Orleans Elementary School Fifth-graders when the OHS hosted its annual “Heritage Day” field trip on October 2. It made for a busy and enjoyable day.

The children first visited Town Hall, where they were treated to a tour of all the town departments. Then they walked to the OHS Museum for a presentation by OHS volunteer Dianne Greaney, who told the story of the CG36500 lifeboat and the famous rescue of 32 crew members from the *Pendleton* in 1952 that resulted in a Gold Medal for each of the boat’s four Coast Guardsmen.

Police Lieutenant Kevin Higgins further enriched the presentation when he told of his uncle's participation in transporting *Pendleton* crew members to Cape Cod Hospital on that stormy night. His uncle, Jack Higgins, was Chief of Police at the time. Students were able to see the antique police car used in the rescue, as Lt. Higgins had driven it to the museum for the children's visit.

Next the fifth-graders took a bus tour of historic sites in Orleans with a running narrative from OHS town historian Bonnie Snow. The children went back to their school with heightened pride in their town, and a respect for its history, accomplishments and present-day viability. The students wrote narratives and created artwork based on what they had learned, and OHS hosted a display and reception of their works on December 5.



Orleans Police Lt. Higgins tells Elementary School students how the town’s 1946 squad car participated in the *Pendleton* rescue during “Heritage Day” at the OHS.

Photo by Dianne Greaney

For photos and artwork, go to:
OrleansHistoricalSociety.org



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Don't miss
The Finest Hours

Disney's feature film about
the **CG36500 lifeboat** and
the **Pendleton rescue**
appearing in theaters starting
Friday January 29.

Check local theater
listings for details!



Author James Tyng talks about the history at Nauset Heights, based on his book of the same name



Members listen intently during the OHS Annual Membership Meeting

“NAUSET HEIGHTS,” HERITAGE CENTER FEATURED AT ANNUAL MEETING

Orleans Historical Society members and Board gathered at Jailhouse Tavern on November 12 to elect new Board members and officers, and hear presentations about Nauset Heights and the Heritage Center during the Annual Membership Meeting and Luncheon. Also introduced was Gail Nessel Colglazier, the new OHS Executive Director, who begins her role in January.

Guest speaker James Tyng, author of the book “Nauset Heights,” provided a historic perspective of the 150-year-old East Orleans community that contains many antique homes, but also illustrates the ravages of severe erosion taking place on the Outer Cape. Autographed copies of the book are available at the OHS Museum Shop.

Board member Jay Stradal concluded the meeting by describing the Heritage Center concept -- the Society's long-range plan for growth that involves improvements to the Meeting House and Hurd Chapel. Also, it requires leasing the adjacent Town-owned parking lot for relocating historic structures or building new ones that will provide critical exhibit and preservation space. The full presentation can be viewed on the OHS website.