



## 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 2016

### GOVERNOR SIGNS '99-YEAR-LEASE' BILL

The Orleans Board of Selectmen may now, by law, negotiate exclusively with the Orleans Historical Society for a 99-year lease of the former American Legion property owned by the Town. The land adjacent to the OHS Meeting House, currently a parking lot, is critical to the Society's expansion and creation of a "Heritage Center" for Orleans residents and visitors alike.

After approval by the Massachusetts legislature, Governor Charlie Baker signed bill H3664, "An Act Authorizing the Town of Orleans To Lease a Certain Parcel of Land," on Nov. 3. Without this special legislation, a lease would have been limited to 30 years and Selectmen would have been required to solicit and negotiate with others, besides OHS, for a lease on the property.

"This is a significant step forward for us and the Town," said Mark Carron, OHS Board Chair. "Now we can all view things from a much longer perspective, discussing our mutual needs for preserving the rich heritage and culture of Orleans as well as protecting historic buildings that otherwise might be lost forever. We look forward to completing lease negotiations with the Town as soon as possible."

Carron explained that an important consideration in the Heritage Center planning is the Town's need for a portion of the parking lot for the Police Department while its new facility is being built. For an interim period, OHS has identified a smaller portion of the property for its immediate use. This would accommodate the proposed expansion of the Meeting House and the relocation and remodeling of the Hurd Chapel to create more usable space. Also there could be room in the smaller portion for relocating and preserving a historic building.

In 2015 OHS announced its Heritage Center plans for creating a historically appropriate setting of multiple buildings where artifacts could be preserved and displayed, and cultural events could be held for the convenience of residents and visitors for generations to come.

### OHS SEEKS BASSETT HOUSE FOR HERITAGE CENTER



*OHS Board members recently toured the Bassett house on Cranberry Highway.*

The Orleans Historical Society is "seriously pursuing" the 1880s Albert Bassett house ("Yellow House" on Route 6A, Orleans) to become part of its Heritage Center (see accompanying article). Final negotiations are underway with the owner, developer Todd Thayer, to determine costs and other details for moving the house pending completion of the Society's negotiations with the Town for a long-term lease of the American Legion property adjacent to its Meeting House on River Rd. Thayer is donating the house to OHS to preserve its historical Victorian architecture.

# ORLEANS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Board of Directors 2016

*Chair*

*Mark Carron*

*Vice-Chair*

*Beverly Fuller*

*Treasurer*

*John Proctor*

*Secretary*

*Kathleen McNeil*

*Alphabetically*

*Richard Besciak*

*Tom Cronin*

*Paul deRuyter*

*Kenneth Fearn*

*Cristina Harter*

*Tish Noyes*

*Peter O'Meara*

*Richard Ryder*

*Bonnie Snow*

*Jay Stradal*

*Bobbie Thomsen*

*Executive Director*

*Gail Nessell Colglazier*

*Immediate Past President*

*Hank Ritchie*

## Letter from the Executive Director

Winter 2016

Reflecting upon my first year at OHS, I am amazed at all that has happened in 2016. Beyond the activities related to our expansion and campaign that you can read about elsewhere in this Newsletter, I want to share some of the year's highlights.

First of all, I have met so many wonderful people. I've been welcomed with open arms since day one, and I'm still meeting new friends and OHS supporters. I also welcomed two new staff members: Pattie Hamilton, who worked at the Rock Harbor souvenir shed this summer, and Nancy Wright, our Office Manager.

Together we've done a lot of behind-the-scenes work to strengthen the organization and help us prepare for our expansion. We are working to reach as many visitors as possible by opening again on Saturdays in the summer, and staying open afternoons as well as mornings. Nancy created a visitor sign-in sheet so we can keep people updated about future OHS activities.

We improved our technology by updating our website, networking our computers, and acquiring an additional computer to accommodate the staff and volunteers who use our network. We can also provide Wi-Fi so visitors can use their laptops or tablets while doing research in our collections.

In our plans for next year, we will be offering a series of Sunday afternoon programs in January, February, and March to give us winter-weary folks something to do besides watch TV and think longingly of spring (see Calendar of Events, p. 5).

I want to close by thanking the people who make the organization tick, starting with the Board members who work so hard on behalf of the OHS. I also want to thank our volunteers, without whom we couldn't do all that we do. I would need more space than I have here to list all of them, but I want to say a special thank you to:

- The wonderful group of CG36500 volunteers who greeted literally hundreds of school students and probably thousands of people over the summer at Rock Harbor. Dick Ryder and Richard Besciak were always available anytime we needed them, and Don St. Pierre, along with Dick, served as our able Coxswains for the boat.
- Cris Harter and Pat Ryder took on the daunting task of managing sales of CG35500 souvenirs to those thousands of visitors.
- Dianne Greaney and Stacia Croteau, led by Bonnie Snow, have provided programs for Orleans 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- Kaeza Fearn has spent countless hours helping Jay Stradal with our Newsletters, promoting our programs, and serving as the fixer of all things Web-related.
- Dave Drabkin has been a faithful weekly volunteer helping with exhibits, processing the backlog of donated items, and answering just about every computer-related question that I pose.

To all of them, and to those that I didn't name, thank you for your support. To all of you reading this, my best wishes for a very happy holiday season and peaceful 2017.

Gail Nessell Colglazier

## Wish List

We would like to thank **Jan Roberts** for donating a mat cutter, **Sally Procter** for a toaster-oven, and **Cary David** and **John Natov** for their precious time taking our event flyers to locations in Orleans, Chatham and Harwich. Current needs:

- Volunteers to come in occasionally to help prepare mailings
- Someone to help with publicity, listing our events on websites of various news outlets (we provide list and event info)

Please contact Gail or Nancy at 508-240-1329 or orleanshs@verizon.net if you would like to help. Thank you!

**BATTENING DOWN THE HATCHES: PREPARING THE CG36500 FOR SEVERE WEATHER**

by Richard Ryder

The history of hurricanes affecting Orleans, and specifically Rock Harbor, is somewhat lacking to me as I have only been involved with the CG36500 for 16 years. However, I experienced hurricanes in 1944 and 1954 in Chatham.



*Extra mooring lines secure the CG36500 for severe weather.*

I am told in years past that some Rock Harbor skippers were tied in, stern first, and then would run anchor lines across the channel to the Eastham side. If there were no boats tied up on that side, or the owners were content not to leave, then this might be an agreeable solution. I am keenly aware that winds from the West, NW, North and NE can affect the boat and the adjacent docks. Hurricane winds are very unpredictable.

Our plan for the last weather event was to run a spare anchor line out from the bow and dig the anchor in at low tide. The only other thing we did was to run a line around a piling that would keep the 21,000-lb. boat from banging into the floats. The cleats on the floats are fine for normal operations, but in rough weather heavier lines tied directly to the pilings are needed.

Our winter berth at Meeting House Pond is much better protected and doesn't have the tidal range that Rock Harbor has. But there have been instances of storms flooding the parking lot at Nauset Marine East. So we have to decide how to handle the risks wherever we might be.



*Spare anchor line is tied to buried anchor for extra safety.*

## Thank you, Nauset Marine!

Since 1981, when the Orleans Historical Society took possession of Motor Lifeboat 36500, Nauset Marine has been generously providing its transport via its hydraulic trailer. The company has moved the 21,000-pound boat to the Dubis yard or Coast Guard Station in Chatham, to Eastham and Chatham for parades, to Orleans center for block parties and parades, and to Meetinghouse Pond for winter storage and return to Rock Harbor every spring. The Nauset Marine staff has always been supportive of the Society, and we are certainly appreciative of their expert boat transport and advice over the years.



**Origins of the Town of Orleans**

by Ron Peterson

The Orleans Historical Markers Committee has placed its latest interpretive marker in the front of Snow Library (Main St.) that tells the story of the origins, founding, incorporation, and naming of the town we call home.

The marker raises an interesting question: did Orleans have a “first resident”? In one sense, the answer is no.

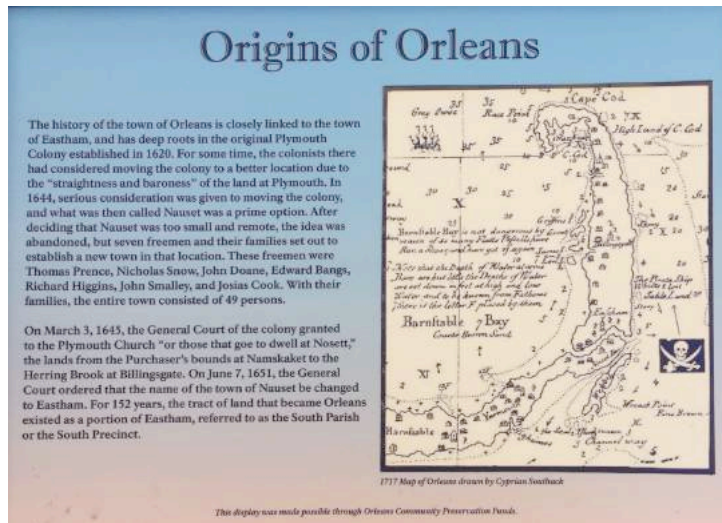
On March 3, 1797 Massachusetts Governor Samuel Adams signed “An act to divide the town of Eastham in the County of Barnstable and to incorporate the Southerly part thereof into a town by the name of Orleans.” Therefore, each of the nearly 1,000 inhabitants of the tract of land that became Orleans, called the South Parish, can be considered our first residents. But if we look a little further back in history, we may come up with a different answer.

For some time after the founding of the Plymouth Colony in 1620, the colonists had considered moving to a more productive location. In 1644, the area then called Nauset was considered, but was rejected as being too small and remote. However, seven freemen and their families set out to establish a new town there. These freemen included Thomas Prence, John Doane, Edward Bangs, Richard Higgins, John Smalley, Josias Cook, and an individual named Nicholas Snow. The entire new town consisted of 49 persons. This migration was approved by the colony’s General Court and, in 1651, the Court ordered that the name of the town of Nauset be changed to Eastham.

It is to Nicholas Snow that we now turn our attention. Snow arrived in Plymouth in 1623 on the ship Ann. He married Constance Hopkins, daughter of Mayflower passenger Stephen Hopkins, and the couple produced 12 children. As a resident of the new town, Snow led an active civic life, serving as selectman, surveyor and constable. As one of the original seven families, the Snows received a tract of land that extended from bay to ocean. Their tract was the only one of the seven that was within the land that became Orleans in 1797. The area of the Snow land was called Namskaket, a name still familiar to us today. While both Snows had died well before the

incorporation of Orleans in 1797, can a case be made that they are our first residents? I believe so.

Orleans is the only town on the Cape with a French name. This is not so surprising when the context of the times of 1797 is considered. Pro-French sentiment was very strong in our new nation, both in gratitude for French assistance during the Revolutionary War and for the pro-liberty struggles that were occurring in France at the time. For the specifics, we turn to the story of Isaac Snow, who served in the War on both land and sea. During his service, Snow was captured twice by the British. On the first occasion, he escaped from his prison ship and made his way to France where he likely became aware of the highly popular Louis Phillippe Joseph, *duc d’ Orleans* (Duke of Orleans). It is said that it was Snow’s suggestion that prompted the local committee and the State Legislature to name the newly incorporated town in honor of the Duke of Orleans.



The history of the town of Orleans is closely linked to the town of Eastham, and has deep roots in the original Plymouth Colony established in 1620. For some time, the colonists there had considered moving the colony to a better location due to the “straightness and baroness” of the land at Plymouth. In 1644, serious consideration was given to moving the colony, and what was then called Nauset was a prime option. After deciding that Nauset was too small and remote, the idea was abandoned, but seven freemen and their families set out to establish a new town in that location. These freemen were Thomas Prence, Nicholas Snow, John Doane, Edward Bangs, Richard Higgins, John Smalley, and Josias Cook. With their families, the entire town consisted of 49 persons.

On March 3, 1645, the General Court of the colony granted to the Plymouth Church “or those that go to dwell at Nauset,” the lands from the Purchaser’s bounds at Namskaket to the Herring Brook at Billingsgate. On June 7, 1651, the General Court ordered that the name of the town of Nauset be changed to Eastham. For 152 years, the tract of land that became Orleans existed as a portion of Eastham, referred to as the South Parish or the South Precinct.

The origin of Orleans has deep roots back to the original Plymouth Colony. The Markers Committee invites one and all to visit the new, three-panel (one shown here) marker in front of Snow Library, which was installed with the support and assistance of the Department of Public Works and the Library Board of Trustees.

## Winter Events: 2016 - 2017

**Saturday, Dec 17 from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm**

*Holiday Open House at the Museum*

Do your holiday shopping in the museum store, enjoy refreshments and explore our exhibits. Join in a Holiday Sing-along and Musical Games with father-daughter duo Ken Fearn and Kaeza Fearn from 2-3 pm. Free to all.

### Winter Weekend Offerings

Looking for something to do during the quiet season? We are pleased to launch a new series of programs on Sunday afternoons in January, February and March. Come out and learn a bit about the history of our area and meet a few other brave folks who stick it out here on the Cape in the off-season. Free to all.

- **Sunday, January 15, 2 p.m.**

*The History of Sea Call Farm* - It's never too early to think about spring planting season! Join OHS Board member and historian Bonnie Snow to discover the history of this hidden gem in Orleans. Bonnie will share historic photos as well as letters written by early residents of the farm.

- **Sunday, February 19, 2 p.m.**

*Rails to Trails: History of Railroads on Cape Cod* - Football season is over, baseball season hasn't started, but railroads are timeless. Jay Stradal, president of the Nauset Model Railroad Club, will describe how and when railroads on the Cape were built and expanded, how they operated and what it was like to ride them in the late 1800s – with some interesting stories along the way.

- **Sunday, March 26, 2 p.m.**

*Not in Vain: Women's voices of the American Revolution* by Nancy Rubin Stuart. Celebrate Women's History Month with the author of *The Muse of the Revolution: The Secret Pen of Mercy Otis Warren and the Founding of a Nation* about Cape Cod's own Revolutionary War hero, and *Defiant Brides: The Untold Story of Two Revolutionary-Era Women and the Radical Men They Married*. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

### Music at the Museum

**Friday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m.**

*Melvin Chen performs works by Couperin, Ravel and Prokofiev*



Mr. Chen has received wide acclaim for performances in major venues throughout the United States and abroad and serves as deputy dean at the Yale University School of Music. Members \$18 Non-members \$20



### Unique Gifts at Museum Store

Visit the museum store for unique holiday gifts. New for the season is a Christmas ornament (below) featuring the CG36500. It is the first in a series of ornaments that will feature items from our collection or historic buildings around town. We also have CG36500 fleece blankets and hoodies for cold winter days, and mugs, vases and ornaments made by Chatham Stoneware. The reader on your list will enjoy Bernie Webber's book, *Chatham, the Lifeboatmen*, on the Pendleton rescue or the OHS publication *Rescue 36500*. Call the museum, stop by or visit our website to see all that we have. Remember, OHS members get 10% off all purchases.





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### CG36500 Volunteer BBQ, Member Reception and Heritage Day



*Attending the CG36500 volunteer's BBQ were Tony Gibson, Pattie Hamilton and David Bromley (above), and Coxswains Richard Ryder and Don St. Pierre (below).*



*OHS members enjoy talking with each other and sampling the food at the member reception (left).*

*Orleans students visited Town Hall, OHS and other places of interest during Heritage Day (below).*

