



To commemorate the town's incorporation 225 years ago, Orleans Elementary School third-graders modeled the Jonathan Young windmill—one of the structures still existing from that time.

BRINGING ORLEANS HISTORY TO LIFE

By Jay Stradal

History and geography of Massachusetts are central to the third-grade curriculum throughout the Commonwealth. Yet the 225th anniversary of Orleans' incorporation recently made Social Studies lessons for 28 third-graders at Orleans Elementary School (OES) even more special.

Librarian Kara Yuen and Art teacher Caitlin Dailey, with support from the Centers for Culture and History in Orleans (the CHO) and the Orleans Historical Commission, created a lesson plan that made sure the town's anniversary did not go unnoticed.

Yuen, a CHO Board member, taught the students that Orleans was once part of Eastham and that its first European settlers came to the area in the mid-1600s. She then talked about Orleans becoming its own town in 1797 and how its French name honors the country that helped win the American Revolution and the Duke of Orleans who strongly believed in liberty.

Also, students learned about and viewed “then and now” photos of three structures that existed in Orleans in 1797 and still stand today. These are the Jonathan Young Windmill, the Lt. Prence Snow House, and the Elnathan/Phebe (Sparrow) Snow House. The children were told about prominent members of the Snow family who lived in the area, including Constance Hopkins Snow and Isaac Snow. Some of their descendants are still here today.

With this background, it was time for Art teacher Dailey to help the students apply what they had learned. First, they viewed photos of the windmill and made a sketch. Then they stacked styrofoam and paper cups, using papier mache to hold them together. Next, they built turbines out of popsicle sticks and toothpicks and, as a final step, got to create their own details around the windmill base including flowers, trees, and water features.

Students also sketched the Lt. Prence Snow and Elnathan/Phebe Snow houses from photos, learning about perspective in drawing and how to sketch a 3-D house with pencils. Some students chose to leave their sketches black and white, while others colored them in to match colors on the houses.

The projects brought Orleans history and geography to life for the students, which is the CHO’s vision. What’s more, the children’s own creativity and imagination doing the sketches and models put a new spin on their Social Studies lessons—the turbine “sails” on the windmill models actually turn!

More pictures of the students’ work will be posted soon on www.CHOcenters.org and on the Orleans Facebook page.

#