BRIEF HISTORY OF ORLEANS

Before Europeans settled on the land which Orleans occupies, this territory was populated by the Wôpanâak (Wampanoag) and Nauset people for thousands of years. In 1616, the European traders brought disease to Indigenous communities, killing two thirds of the population. In 1644, farmers settled the Nauset colony, which would become Eastham in 1651. The south of Eastham became Orleans in 1797.

In the early years of the town, the economy was centered around the sea with fishing, sailing and whaling as main activities. When the railroad arrived in 1865, it opened up the town to new industries and to tourists. In the latter 19th century, Orleans became known as a "Pants" town, for the Cummings and Howes factory based here produced textiles mostly for pants.

Orleans twice faced direct enemy attack. During the War of 1812, the citizens of Orleans repelled the British during the Battle of Rock Harbor, protecting their town and their goods. In 1918, Orleans was the only place on US soil to come under German fire when a U-Boat fired at a tugboat off Nauset Beach.

THE CENTERS for
CULTURE and HISTORY in ORLEANS

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Downtown Orleans, circa 1950

BONNIE SNOW'S WALKING TOURS OF ORLEANS

Presented by the Centers for Culture and History of Orleans (CHO).

I love Orleans. I've lived most of my life here learning about our rich heritage, and I enjoy sharing that knowledge with residents and visitors alike in my history walks.

Too much of our Town's past has been lost in the name of "progress." I don't want that to happen to our landmarks and historic sites. They epitomize the very essence of our nearly 400-year seaside heritage and, to me, preservation is critically important to Orleans. Protecting these landmarks and making them more available to the public will help bring our local history to life for generations to come.

Please enjoy this self-guided tour--while respecting the private property rights of owners. Sites are visible from public streets and pathways.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Snow, Orleans town historian

TO ACCESS BONNIE SNOW'S WALKING TOURS

Scan the QR codes with your phone camera. It works **best** if you have the Google Maps application.

There are 2 tours:

🚶 East Orleans: 🚶 Main Street:

The tour of **East Orleans** takes about 25 minutes.

The Tour of **Main Street** takes about 45 minutes.

Click on each icon on the map to read more about the history of each site and to see pictures !

These tours are based on original tours of Orleans by town historian Bonnie Snow, which she has given for decades. On these tours, you will discover the history of each monument, and through them, the history of the town of Orleans itself.

If you want to learn even more about Orleans, there is also a map of **Historical Sites of Interest** that can be found by scanning the QR code below. Sites of interest on this map include Nauset Beach, Rock Harbor and the Jonathan Young Windmill.

Land Acknowledgment

The CHO and the town of Orleans are situated on Nauset and Wôpanâak (Wampanoag) land. The Wampanoag people have always existed on this land; they exist today and will continue to exist. We acknowledge their role as guardians of this territory.

FAQ

Q: Will the map work on my smartphone if I do not have Google Maps ?

A: It does not work efficiently if you do not have Google Maps. We suggest that you download the free application before embarking on the tour.

Q: Where do the tours start?

A: Both tours starts at the CHO Meetinghouse at 3 River Road. From there, follow the numbered stops on the map.

Q: While on my phone, I am clicking on the icons, but I do not see any description of the site? Where is the information?

A: Once you click on the icon, click on the white banner at the bottom of the screen; this will allow you to scroll down and find information and pictures.

Q: Where else can I access these virtual tours?

A: The maps are all available on the CHO's website:

Website
www.CHOcenters.org