



Membership Renewal Time!

Our members are our most important asset. Please use the envelope enclosed to renew your membership for 2015 and keep things humming in the Old Town House.

2014: a Quieter Year with Important Progress

The year 2014 proved a quieter year than the previous two, with no new construction taking place. It was a year the Historical Society caught its breath, started building a Web site, opened its archives to the public one afternoon a week, treated the public to strawberry shortcake, and, as always, recorded and broadcast some Otisfield history in four public programs.

The first program, held in April, titled "Food from the Fifties," included not only a luncheon with food from the Fifties but also an informative



"Food from the Fifties" program display, April 2014.

talk about food trends by Polly Bartow. In June and August Ethel Turner and Jean Hankins presented a power point presentation summarizing their research on the summer camps on Pleasant Pond. In September Celeste Hyer and Quentin Henderson remembered Orrell Linnell, the Otisfield Centenarian who lived



Quentin Henderson's photo display at OHS Program on Orrell Linnell. Nov. 2014



Two visitors enjoying sweet shortcake at the Town House, July 2014.

most of his long life in the Gore section of town. And in November, Jean Pottle and Jean Hankins explained how Santa Claus has changed his appearance over the years. We also served strawberry shortcake to over 100 folks in July, and a good number enjoyed our August picnic at the Bartow Camp on Thompson Lake.

Hamilton Succeeds Hamilton

After nine valiant years as President of the Historical Society, Henry Hamilton stepped down in April. Fortunately, we did not have to look far for someone to replace him. Shirley Hamilton, wife of Henry, is now holding the reins. Thank you, Henry. Welcome, Shirley!

Archives Open Weekly

With the Sybil Lamb Archival Room completely refurbished with good lighting, climate controls, stacks of document boxes, and even a work table, we opened that room for public use on Wednesday afternoons from May to November. The public's interest has been unexpectedly high, and we've had a number of folks—from Otisfield and beyond—poring over maps, photographs, and old papers just about every time we've been open. On May 6 we'll start our second season.

Gifts Great and Small

During 2014 a number of historically-minded folks gave us a wide variety of manuscripts, photos, and artifacts, all with an Otisfield connection. Among them: a large box of memorabilia, yearbooks, and photos from Great Oaks; the letters and papers of Dr. Beryl Moore; a piece of cloth woven from flax grown in Otisfield; Wight family legal papers; and the genealogy of the McAuliffe family. Thank you! Now cataloged, these are ready for public inspection.



New Town House Plaque

Historic Plaque Added

On your next drive up Bell Hill, go slowly and notice our new plaque on the Old Town House, located to the lower left of the front steps. We're pretty proud of it, because it tells the world that the Town House, built in 1905, has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

OHS Officers for 2015

President – Shirley Hamilton
 Vice-Pres. - Callie Zilinsky
 Secretary - Jean Pottle
 Treasurer - Polly Bartow
 Archivist-Newsletter – Jean Hankins
 Directors: Derek Dorr, Alan Douglass, Genise Stern, Celeste Hyer.

Website Launched

The Historical Society now has its own website, thanks to the talents of our new director, Derek Dorr, who officiated at launching <http://www.otisfield.org>. As the site expands, you can use it to learn more about what's in our archives, our forthcoming programs, and how our fundraising is coming along. History is made every day, and we're doing our best to preserve what happens on the local front. We hope you'll check in frequently.

Two Recent Grants Awarded

During one week in November 2014, the mailman rewarded our patience with not one but two letters notifying us of grants. The first came from the Belvedere Fund, part of the Maine Community Foundation, and awarded us \$6500 to be spent on site work around the Town House. The second was also sweet: \$5500 from the Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust to complete structural renovations on the building. What this means is that this spring green grass will grow around the building, and you'll no longer have to stare at sheetrock when you enter the rear door of the building. We are most grateful to both of these Maine-based charitable foundations.



Future handicapped bathroom as it looks today. Funding still to come!

Musarch to Replace Handwritten Cards

A new computerized cataloging system makes research easier. After considerable discussion, the Board decided it was high time to enter the 21st century, by replacing the handwritten cards stored in shoeboxes with something more digital. Consequently Dave Hyer installed the Musarch software system, and a couple of us have spent considerable time this winter re-cataloging. In the process, we've found a lot of fascinating items we'd forgotten we had. Because the new software enables us to search our holdings by title, names, and keywords, it should help us keep better track of our documents and information.

Programs for 2015

On April 16, we'll survey the general stores located in the villages of Bell Hill, East Otisfield, Spurrs Corner, and Bolsters Mills. On June 18, we'll have fun talking about Otisfield's only newspaper, **The Otisfield News**, which Ethel Hirst produced for about 5 years in the late 1940s. This summer we'll again sponsor a strawberry festival, this time on July 5 to coincide with a concert on Bell Hill. Then on September 17 we'll hear from food historian John Manoush, who'll tell us more about why we eat what we do. Finally, on October 22, we'll coordinate with the Otisfield Conservation Committee for a look at the history, flora, and fauna of the Coon Road Swamp.



General Store, Hancockville, undated photo.

CALENDAR FOR 2015

All programs will begin about 7 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

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| April 16 | Otisfield's General Stores – Community Hall |
| June 18 | Ethel Hirst and <i>The Otisfield News</i> – Town House |
| July 5 | Strawberry festival, Town House, 4:30-6:30 |
| Sept. 17 | John Manoush, "The Foods We Eat" – Town House |
| Oct. 22 | The Coon Road Swamp - Community Hall
(co-sponsored by the Otisfield Conservation Committee) |