



ONWARD AND UPWARD

We could not be happier with how our 2025 season unfolded! The Society welcomed three guest speakers, Anne Fritts on Camp Arcadia, Cheryl Callahan on Wool and Sheep and Archeologist Dr. Barry Rodrigue. The front entrance to the historic Town House was fully replaced with safe and long lasting materials, thanks in large part to the support of our membership. We also had our most successful Strawberry Festival to date, at the Community Hall, featuring the live music of the Lake Region Strummers. This year we also welcomed a new member to our Board of Directors! We happily welcome Laurie Wood as our newest Trustee. Laurie and her husband, Scott, recently relocated to Otisfield from Yarmouth.

The upcoming season promises to be an exciting one as we prepare to celebrate the upcoming Semiquincentennial of America!

LET THE CELEBRATION BEGIN

As we look toward a new year, we have many exciting plans in the works. This year also happens to mark the 250th Birthday of America and we hope to celebrate it in grand fashion:

First on our agenda, in June, will be revisiting the beginnings of Otisfield at the millsite at Edes Falls where it all began. Bring a comfortable chair and lunch to the site where George Peirce arrived in 1775 and spent all of the Revolutionary War years creating what became Otisfield.

Next up, in July, will be our ever popular Strawberry Festival. We will continue to serve up homemade shortcake in the Community Hall accompanied by the Lake Region Strummers. If you would like to volunteer, we are always in need of extra hands.

One of our most exciting programs in the coming year, this August, will feature Revolutionary Era artisans plying their trade, a tasting station featuring foods of the time period, period games to keep everyone entertained and much more. If you are a reenactor or know the skills of yesteryear, please let us know you can help us out.

The final program of the year in September will see us embody some of the 40 known Revolutionary War veterans who settled in Otisfield. We will be asking for audience participation, so don't forget your tricorne hat!

PRESERVATION IS NEVER DONE

As many may remember, we spent part of last year replacing the front entrance to the Town House to make it both safe and long-lasting. With the expertise of Ken Bartow, we were able to remove potentially dangerous rot and replace it with durable composite materials that will last for years.

This effort would not have been possible without the incredible generosity of our members, contributions from the Town of Otisfield, and the Community Giving Program at Norway Savings Bank. We would like to extend our thanks, once again, to our community.

However, preserving historic buildings is never done. During construction of our steps, we were alerted to the fact that there is damage near the sills of the Town House, seemingly caused by splashback from the heat pump that keeps the archives climate controlled. In the coming year, we will be exploring the extent of the damage that was discovered and fixing whatever issues arise. We hope to be able to keep these repairs to a minimum and fund them from our budget, as grants have become increasingly scarce and competitive.



The front entrance of the Town House as repairs begin

Make sure to check us out online

www.otisfield.org

Facebook.com/OtisfieldHistoricalSociety

YouTube.com/otisfieldhistorical

Instagram.com/otisfieldhistorical

GRANGE BULLETIN BOARD RETURNS HOME

Clark and Jane Irwin of Flat Rock, North Carolina have donated the original bulletin board that hung outside the Spurrs Corner Grange until it was dismantled in 1967. The building at Spurrs Corner that would become the grange hall, had been operated as a store by Oliver Cooley beginning in 1838. Eventually, a new store was built across the road at the intersection of the Casco-Bolsters Mills and Oak Hill Roads. On January 8, 1908, Grange #117 (the Spurrs Corner Grange) was organized with 40 charter members. The last names of the officers elected that evening are names you will recognize – Martin, Nutting, Kemp, Barrows, Stone, Dyer, Lamb, and Scribner. During its 60 years of use, over 100 members were enrolled. An ell was built on the building and a kitchen was finished off in the hall downstairs. Many public entertainments, dances, and suppers were served in the hall. Grange meetings were discontinued there around 1960 and the few remaining grangers transferred to Federick Robie Grange on Otisfield Gore.

The building was razed in 1967 by Linley Peaco who used the material to build a place in the Saturday Pond area of town. During the demolition, Clark Irwin Jr. and his dad were driving by the demolition site to work on their Oak Hill Road farm. Clark spotted the bulletin board and immediately thought it would be a nice decorative item for his frat-house at Bowdoin College. They stopped and asked one of the guys if he might have it. He obligingly crow-barred it off the wall and the bulletin board began its travels through several of Clark's houses in Maine, Virginia and North Carolina.

Last year, Clark offered it to the Otisfield Historical Society and he and Jane drove it back to Maine. It is now part of our collection in our archives. We are very grateful to Clark that he took such good care of it for the past almost 60 years and that he took the time and effort to bring it back to us.



Clark and Jane Irwin pictured with the original bulletin board from the Spurrs Corner Grange, which was demolished in 1967

JOIN OUR BOARD

Since our founding in 1981, the Directors and Trustees of the Otisfield Historical Society have overseen its mission: the preservation of the history of Otisfield, making that history accessible, and promoting an interest in history amongst the community at large. Over the years, the Society has grown and modernized, from storing artifacts at Hankins' Family barn on Scribner Hill to using climate-controlled storage inside the renovated and rehabilitated Old Town House.

Without the commitment and leadership of the many who have served on the Board of Directors, we would not have been able to accomplish our mission. We now have thousands of pieces in our collection, kept safe and made available to the public. We host numerous programs throughout the year and continually try new ideas to increase engagement with our history.

We are currently on the hunt for new board members to help us to preserve the history of Otisfield and guide the Society far into the future. Board members attend four meetings per year to help decide on projects, keep our collection up to date, and keep a watchful eye on our annual budget. Expectations include becoming familiar with our archives, contributing as available to our programs and our Annual Strawberry Festival, and following our mission of collecting and preserving the History of Otisfield.

If you are interested in helping to continue our mission, please reach out to us at otisfieldhistorical@gmail.com.



Textile Historian, Cheryl Callahan, demonstrating the technique used to spin fibers into thread

Calendar For 2026

June 20th- Origins of Otisfield at Edes Falls 11am
July 5th - Strawberry Festival - Community Hall 4pm-6pm
August 22nd- Revolutionary War Fair 4pm-6pm
September 19th - Revolutionary War Settlers 7pm