



SUPPORT YOUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Otisfield Historical Society needs your continued support – to keep our building humming and warm, to pay our insurance and electric bills, to buy all kinds of archival boxes and folders. This year our big expenditure was cleaning the walls and ceiling of this 114-year old Town House. While the walls may have been cleaned before, we're quite sure the ceiling had not, so when you're here next, be sure to look up and see what we—and you—have accomplished. Please insert your generous check and mail it in the envelope enclosed. Your contributions enable us keep up with Otisfield's history.

PROGRAMS AHEAD

We start our well-rounded year of programs April 18th when Pam Hodenburg of Bridgton presents the diary of her great grandmother, Nellie (Chute) Edwards of Otisfield, who wrote in her diary every day of 1918. You may be surprised to find how different her life was from that of a middle-aged housewife today! On June 20th, Peter Stowell from Bethel will enlighten us about something most of us would also like to know more about: the Indians of Western Maine. Did they live in Otisfield? Come find out! Then on August 15th, our own Derek Dorr will back away from 21st century electronics to coordinate everything we know about Joe Holden, probably the only world-famous individual the town ever had. Come hear how he explained the theory of a flat earth! Finally, on October 17th, Celeste Hyer, a former official of the Maine Genealogy Society, will present Genealogy 101, aimed for beginners as well as more experienced ancestor-hunters. As always, everyone is welcome.

And don't forget the Strawberry Festival on July 7th, 4:30-6:30 p.m., at the Old Town House. This year you'll get a chance to purchase our homemade strawberry jam and other strawberry goodies in addition to the delicious shortcake.



Presenter Jim Howard, demonstrating the differences between alternating and direct current with assistance from David and Celeste Hyer and Tom Peaco

GADDING ABOUT

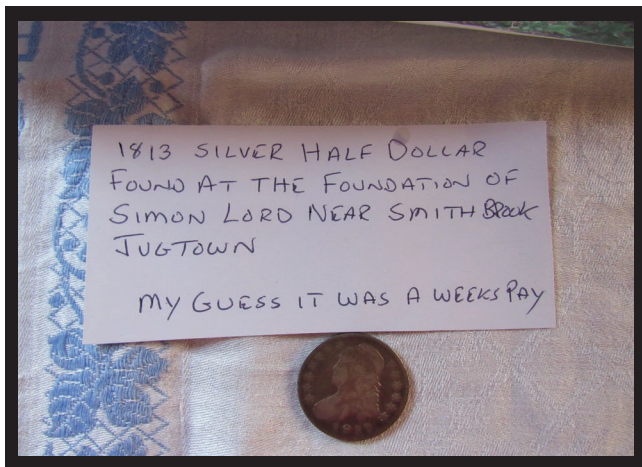
The spring months were a busy time for OHS directors. Even when not preparing programs for the public, most have been busily honing their historical skills by attending workshops or meeting with other historians. Alan and Janet Douglass, for example, travelled to Boothbay Harbor to attend a Maine Archives and Museum workshop on oral history. Then in early May, Jean Pottle and Jean Hankins visited Pamela Marshall's students at Otisfield Community School who were studying the Revolution and Civil War. A few days later two of us attended a meeting in Oxford of representatives from several Oxford County historical societies with the goal of sharing resources and ideas. Also, last spring Celeste Hyer and Jean Hankins travelled to a meeting of the Buckfield Historical Society. This outing included a building and archives tour, followed by our short summary of how Otisfield renovated the Old Town House and created a new archival room. Everyone involved in these intramural meetings agrees they're very helpful, and we hope to have more in the future.



The Spurr's Corner School as it is moved to East Otisfield (Pugleville) to form part of Otisfield Central School, in the late 1940s

MANY GIFTS AND MISSING PIECES

The Historical Society's holdings grew slowly but well in 2018, thanks to some thirty-eight donations of papers, diaries, objects. While we're grateful for all, we do want to single out one from the estate of Bourdon Scribner of Harrison, who gave us many old town documents over the years but managed to save the best for last – the record book of Grinfill Blake (d. 1824), a justice of the peace who lived on the Otisfield side of Bolster's Mills. His handsome home still graces the slopes of Big Hill Road. His record book, kept until he died, lists the verdicts and fines he handed down in the many civil and criminal cases he tried, including some for assault and battery. It also records chronologically the many couples he married, signing each item with the legally binding word "attest."



An old coin, found by Larry Nadeau in Jugtown, that was displayed as part of our June program on Old Cellar Holes.

2018 PROGRAMS IN REVIEW

On April 12th we elected officers and electrified the audience. (The actual topic was “Electrifying Otisfield.”) Jim Howard, Callie Zilinsky, and Jean Hankins explained exactly how Otisfield first got wired up in the 1920s. At our June program, Alan Douglass, ably seconded by Otisfield Metal Detector Extraordinaire Larry Nadeau, showed off pictures of a few of the town’s many cellar holes and the treasures to be found in them. For the September 20th program, we had a replay of the “What’s in Those Boxes?” motif used last year as well, this time using a fresh set of intriguing collections. Finally, on Nov. 8th, Callie Zilinsky showed pictures and recounted tales about how the town moved its schools from the small, one-room format to a town-wide operation. Present for the program were several others who had experienced going to school in the Community Hall during the brief transition between the two school systems.

PHOTOGRAPHERS TAKE NOTICE!

We’re giving advance notice that OHS will soon be looking for your best photos of Otisfield! For 2020 we plan to publish a special “Otisfield Scenes” calendar featuring your best pictures of our beautiful town. Participants won’t be required to be Otisfield residents.

Our judges will select 13 photos for the calendar. We’ll have prizes and a fun awards event, so stay tuned. Watch for details coming soon! If you can’t wait for more information, email pollytb55@gmail.com.

LOSING ONE OF OUR OWN

In December, the historical society lost one of their former presidents, Henry H. Hamilton, who died of cancer. Born in Otisfield, Henry was educated not only in town schools but at the University of Maine, University of Alabama, and a number of other institutions. He spent most of his professional life serving U.S. and international organizations in such exotic places as Kenya and Afghanistan. On retiring from foreign service, he and wife Shirley returned to Otisfield where they built a large house and barn and raised exotic livestock and poultry. Henry, president of OHS from 2005 to 2014, was the main force spearheading the organization’s drive to raise funds needed to refurbish the Old Town House. He will be sorely missed.



Director Celeste Hyer explains the contents of our Grinfill Holden Collection to Priscilla Delehanty at the September program

CURRENT OHS OFFICERS

President - Shirley Hamilton
 Vice-President - Callie Zilinsky
 Secretary - Jean Pottle
 Treasurer - Polly Bartow
 Archivists - Jean Hankins, Ethel Turner
 Directors - Derek Dorr, Alan Douglass
 and Celeste Hyer

Make sure to check us out online

www.otisfield.org

[Facebook.com/OtisfieldHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/OtisfieldHistoricalSociety)

[YouTube.com/otisfieldhistorical](https://www.youtube.com/otisfieldhistorical)

[Instagram.com/otisfieldhistorical](https://www.instagram.com/otisfieldhistorical)

Calendar For 2019

All programs start at 7 p.m.

April 18th - The Diary of Nellie Chute Edwards - Community Hall

June 20th - Lost Indian Tribes of Western Maine - Old Town House

July 7th - Strawberry Festival - Old Town House 4:30-6:30

August 15th - Joe Holden Day - Old Town House

October 17th - Genealogy 101 - Community Hall