

2018 MEMBERSHIP DUES

We thank you all for your past support as we continue on our mission to save and make accessible the history of Otisfield! Now that the outside walls of the Old Town House are reinforced and the exterior in good shape, this year we'd like to look at the century-old interior walls and ceiling which badly need cleaning. Your yearly dues might also enable us to replace the dreadful dangling fluorescent lights with something better—and prettier, too. Your contributions can literally light up the Old Town House!

PROGRAMS FOR 2018

We start off at the Community Hall on April 12th with, "Electrifying Otisfield" probably the one invention of the 20th century that's made the most difference. Then, meeting at the Old Town House on June 21st we'll focus on the many old cellar holes in tow, with Alan Douglass keeping count. The program on September 20th, also at the Old Town House, will be similar to a very successful one we held in 2017, and is also titled, "What's in Those Boxes?" Once again we'll transform the big room of the Town House into a museum-style exhibit that will let us show off the contents of some more of those archival boxes. Finally, on November 8th, we'll meet, appropriately, at the Community Hall for a program titled "Going to School at the Community Hall," a memories session for the years in the 1940s when the Hall provided school classrooms.

And don't forget the Strawberry Festival at the Old Town House, 4:30-6:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 8th. Afterwards you may wish to head up the hill for a 7 p.m. concert at the Bell Hill Meetinghouse sponsored by the Bell Hill Meetinghouse Association.

CHAIRS, CHAIRS, CHAIRS

Got any chairs stored in your attic that look like this bow backed Windsor? If so, please consider donating them to the Historical Society! When the town gave us the Old Town House in 2009, it came furnished – up to a point. Even though these old wooden chairs don't stack, they're comfortable, sturdy, pretty maintenance free, and, best of all, they look right. But we don't have enough and often have to supplement with the folding kind that produce backaches and cramps. So look around and see if you have any spare ones that match! Or maybe check out your favorite antique shop. If you find a possibility but aren't sure, give President Shirley Hamilton a call at 627-4458.



HANNAFORD HELPS OHS

Be on the lookout at the Oxford Hannaford for the Hannaford Helps reusable bags. For the entire month of **February**, we will receive proceeds from the purchase of every Hannaford Helps bag.



OLD TOWN HOUSE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC RESERVATION

The Board of Directors for the Otisfield Historical Society has adopted an acceptable use policy for public reservation of the Old Town House. The policy and form are available on our website. Any person or non-profit in the wider Otisfield community can request use of the space between May 1 and October 15. Events are limited in size to 25 people and reservation requires a refundable \$100 security deposit. Please remember that we do not have adequate facilities for the preparation of a full meal.



President Shirley Hamilton and a volunteer hand out reminders for the upcoming Strawberry Festival in last years 4th of July Parade

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,
Genise Stern, Celeste Hyer

DIGITIZING OTISFIELD

Last summer a contingent from OHS drove up to Colby College for an all-day Maine Archives and Museums workshop in which experts from the around the state informed us on the whys and wherefores of digitizing (or scanning) some of our collections. They soon convinced us that digitizing will serve at least two good purposes. It will ensure a safe backup for our more important documents and photos, and it will hugely increase public access to what's in those archival boxes. Recently we formed a small Digitizing Committee chaired by OHS Director Derek Dorr. The first collection we're planning to scan will include the many photos we have of Otisfield school buildings and schoolchildren. Once we're done, you'll have access to these through your smart phone or computer. We have no idea how long this will take or what pitfalls we'll encounter, but we're about to find out. Stay tuned!

Meanwhile, if you can't wait, OHS has already been involved in two off-site digitizing projects, one showing early photos of Otisfield schools, and one of The Otisfield News, 1945-1949. To see these photos, visit www.maine-memory.net and search Otisfield Schools. To view copies digitized by the Maine State Archives from 1945 of The Otisfield News, visit www.digitalmaine.com and search Otisfield News. As always, these links are available on our website as well.

PROGRAMS HELD IN 2017

On April 20th a good-sized audience greeted two visitors from the Oxford County Court House, namely Register of Deeds Pat Shearman and Probate Register Jennifer Dilworth. In turn, the two explained how to go about researching their records through the internet. Both handed out informative instruction sheets and explained how using their land records and estate records can provide important information for historians and genealogists. In June we brought some archival boxes upstairs and spread their precious contents out on large tables for close inspection by a goodly number of curious visitors. Several of the OHS directors were stationed around the room to serve as docents and guides. Quilts, walking sticks, old letters, maps, school photos, and photograph albums all got their due respect and appreciation. At the September program, Jean Hankins reviewed the history of the poor in Otisfield. After reading aloud her essay titled "A Cage for John Sawyer," she concluded that, for the most part, her original findings had held up well.

In November at a program titled "William Spurr: Town Historian, Town Character," a panel of OHS directors presented what they had learned—and what we still don't know—about Spurr, who died in 1977. Some of those attending rounded out the discussion nicely with their own recollections.



Visitors to the What's In Those Boxes program in June explore a selection of items from our Archives.

THE BARTOW TEAM, STILL CONTRIBUTING

Even though their winter residence is now Biddeford, in 2017 the Bartow team—Ken and Polly—continued to make major contributions to Otisfield and the Otisfield Historical Society. Polly has served for several years as our Treasurer. Her careful and intelligent management of income and expenses have served us well, and OHS finances remain in the black. In addition, she has been a vital member of our grant writing committee and has provided the detailed and informative figures that all charitable foundations require. OHS is greatly indebted this year also to Ken Bartow, who in past years volunteered his experience to manage the rehabilitation of and addition to the Old Town House. This year, with the Old Town House needing interior windows and screens repaired, he stepped up again, in his humble and quiet way, and soon produced a set of 10 or 11 good-as-new screens. No more mosquitoes in the Old Town House on hot summer nights!



Our much appreciated Treasurer Polly Bartow and her ever helpful husband, Ken Bartow.

Calendar For 2018

All programs start at 7 p.m.

April 12th - Electrifying Otisfield - Community Hall

June 21st - Old Cellar Holes - Old Town House

July 8th - Strawberry Festival - Old Town House 4:30-6:30

September 20th - What's In Those Boxes, Part 2 - Old Town House

November 8th - Going To School In The Community Hall - Community Hall

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)