



SUPPORT YOUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This year the State of Maine is 200 years old. And Otisfield, incorporated in 1798, is 222! As the custodian of many of the Town's historical records and the keeper of its traditions, we invite you to continue giving us your support, financial and personal, during this important year. As you'll read below, we're taking on a lot in 2020! In April we'll be at History Night at the Otisfield School helping show students and parents what school used to be like. In June we're joining with the Otisfield Conservation Committee to explore how Otisfield's agriculture and natural resources have changed. On July 12th we'll be serving Strawberry Shortcake at the Town House from 4:30 on. On July 26th we're taking part in the Bell Hill Meetinghouse's program with a talk on how and why Maine left Massachusetts. And in August we're conducting an Old House Tour of some of the town's earliest homes.

Please return the enclosed envelope to our treasurer. We welcome your help, your participation, and your enthusiasm!

NEW REVISED CONSTITUTION

After years of coping with inconsistencies in the old historical society Constitution and the way we're actually operating, we have finally drafted a new constitution and by-laws, which the board of directors has approved. We now need to have all of our members vote on it.

To that end we are inviting you to review the new, proposed document on the OHS website. Print it out and bring any questions to our June 18th meeting when we'll have the formal, binding vote.

TOM PEACO SCANS OLD DOCUMENTS

Last fall, OHS member Tom Peaco undertook a couple of huge scanning jobs which promise to be an enormous benefit to researchers who cannot personally come use our archives. He spent hours at the Town House, first digitizing over 100 pages of the record book kept by an early Otisfield justice of the peace, Grinfill Blake, who died in 1824.

Second, he went to work on all the pages of all the old town reports up to 1950, starting with the first one circulated, back in 1865, which was handwritten! These include all reports for nearly all the years up to the present. The digital version of all these is now located on the Town House computer, but will soon be added to the OHS Website for unrestricted public use.

TOWN POUND RECEIVES IMPORTANT NOMINATION

In October, Callie Zilinsky and Jean Hankins travelled to Lewiston to the Kora Temple to attend a regular meeting of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. During the meeting, several important Maine buildings and landmarks were nominated by the Commission for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Such a nomination, the result of at least two years of hard research and hard work by members of the OHS and the Historic Commission, virtually ensures its acceptance by the national board.

The Town Pound, built by the town in 1818 to house stray animals, will join two or three Otisfield houses, the Bell Hill Meetinghouse and schoolhouse, the Old Town House, and the Ryefield Bridge on the National Register. Still owned by the town, the pound is located adjacent to 322 Bell Hill Road, which once was the home of Stephen Knight, the first pound keeper.



The Town Pound as it stands today and much like it stood during the 19th Century, will soon be on the National Register of Historic Places

FIND US ONLINE

If you haven't yet connected with us online, be sure to check us out at www.otisfield.org. In addition to old photographs, this year we added "A Maine Woman Goes South," a compilation of letters from Nellie Pottle as well as "Soul Searching", Jean Hankins' study of diaries of ten Otisfield residents dating between 1814 and 1946.

Additionally, we invite everyone to subscribe to our email list, connect with us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram or watch our past programs on our YouTube channel.

HANDSOME STOVE GLEAMS BRIGHTLY

In September, we received one of our largest donations ever—a handsomely refurbished old parlor stove with gleaming chrome trim, the gift of long-time member Olive Berkett. The stove, which cannot be used, now stands near the chimney of the main room in the Town House. Thanks to Olive and also Director Alan Douglass who helped install it.



*Our new, beautiful stove installed
at the Town House*

IN MEMORIAM

The Historical Society and Otisfield and Casco communities suffered a loss in 2019 with the death of Jean Pottle, resident of both towns in recent years. Always happy to volunteer, Jean will be greatly missed. In recent years she served faithfully as secretary of the Otisfield Historical Society. Born in Richmond, Maine, in 1933, she married Kemp Pottle in 1956. Jean had a long teaching career, particularly in the Potsdam, New York area and later in the Casco schools and at Mid-State College in Auburn. We miss her cheerfulness and willingness to serve.



*Jean Pottle, pictured here regaling us with tales of
William Spurr, will be sorely missed by us all*

BICENTENNIAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 30th - History Night at Otisfield Community School

What was school life like in 19th Century Otisfield? Come and learn along with the schoolkids!

June 18th - Agriculture, Flora and Fauna

How has our landscape changed in 200 years? Ever hear about the Island Sheep?

July 4th - Otisfield's Annual Parade

Celebrate America's Birthday in style!

July 12th - Strawberry Festival and Bell Hill Meetinghouse Concert

Delicious local, homemade shortcake followed by a fantastic concert. What have you got to lose?

July 26th - Bell Hill Meetinghouse Annual Program

Dr. Jean Hankins educates us on Maine's split with Massachusetts followed by an ice cream social and concert

August 23rd - Oldest Houses Tour

Learn more about your community with this informative house tour

September 26th - 1820 Contra Dance

Put on your dancing shoes and step back in time