

Making History Every Day

January and February 2023, Volume 6, Issue 1

Oxford Historical Society, a 501 (c) 3 charitable organization

Twitchell Rowland Homestead Museum

P.O. Box 582, 60 Towner Lane, Oxford, CT 06478



**Preparing to
welcome students to
Mr. Munn's 1850's
Schoolhouse**



Join the Oxford Historical Society now!

The Society has worked hard to move, renovate, restore and preserve Mr. Munn's 1850's one-room schoolhouse. As we get ready to host students at the "new" facility, we're inviting folks to join with us in this exciting program.

Don't miss the opportunity for preserving Oxford's rural heritage and sharing the fun of local history with Oxford's school students. Plus, we have lots of programs planned for all ages!

To join or renew your membership send the form on page 4.



**GIVING
TUESDAY**

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Our campaign for **Giving Tuesday 2022** met our goal of \$2,000. Over the two weeks following Nov. 30, we had donations of mailed checks, and gifts via our FaceBook page and Paypal. We started with a matching challenge of \$500 from a retired town educator and met that in the first 48 hours! As money continued to come in we collected funds needed for the student supplies to use in our restored Munn Schoolhouse. We are hopeful the doors will open this spring!

See the article at right for an important way **YOU** can help us host Oxford school children. :



Ion Bank 2023 Community Support Campaign

We need your vote. **Ion Bank's Community Support 2023** campaign offers donors the opportunity to use bank foundation funds to support local non-profits. Anyone with a bank account at Ion Bank can vote (only once) and each vote adds \$25 to the society's tally. Accounts with multiple names allow each person one vote, but multiple accounts do not qualify for more than one vote. What better way to provide support than with someone else's money?!

April 2023

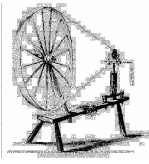
Annual Fiber Fest

The Homestead, 60 Towner Lane

Saturday April 15, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday April 16, noon - 4 p.m.

**Sheep shearing will occur multiple times,
check the schedule.**



Free Admission. All ages are welcome to walk the grounds. Locally raised live animals will be on display including sheep, rabbits and alpaca. See our room size barn loom at work. Watch and try carding and spinning, see a spinning wheel in use. Try your hand at weaving on a table loom, give the drop spindle a try. Explore the 1755 Twitchell Rowland Homestead and displays. Nearly a dozen fiber crafters from around the state will be visiting and sharing their skills plus offering products for sale. Snacks will be available. You do not want to miss this special two day event.



**January 8 and 15 and February 5 and 19
Homestead Open House, 2 - 4 p.m.**

Drop in and experience Oxford's living history. The 1755 Twitchell-Rowland Homestead was saved from destruction and relocated to its current site at 60 Towner Lane thanks to community support of a historic level. Pictures of the historic house move and regular monthly displays of Oxford life and living are featured. Books on Oxford are on sale, photo notecards and T-shirts support the ongoing maintenance of the Homestead and Society activities.

Our current display is "Gifts from the Past", a collection of family treasures and memories loaned by members of the Oxford Historical Society Board of Directors. These vary from a lovely porcelain teapot used in a Christian Street home in the early 20th century to a wonderful toy barn with all its animal residents from 1947.



Society benefits from CT Humanities Grants

2022 saw state non-profit groups offered a helping hand in acknowledgment of the impact of the Covid pandemic severely limiting fundraising opportunities in 2020 and 2021.

Thanks to the energies and efforts of Society member Dottie DeBisschop the Oxford Historical Society applied for and received funding provided by the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) from the Connecticut State Legislature. An additional grant was provided from the CT Humanities (CTH) through the Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan with monies from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act.

These grants underwrote society operating expenses in 2022 and allowed us to launch a website upgrade project, hiring a consultant who updated and restructured the society's website and consolidated the content found on the OHS web presence.

OHS has been notified that it is approved for another cycle of operating expenses support for 2023. The Society is hopeful the coming year will see more opportunities to meet with members of the community and return to events that support the society's mission to educate and preserve local history in Oxford, the lower Naugatuck Valley and the state of Connecticut.

Help Wanted!

Love history? Fascinated by old houses? What a great opportunity to share your passion by becoming a docent at The Homestead.

We will give you training and you can share the fun with other volunteers. You do not need to be a member to qualify. For more information contact: Nancy Farnum 203-888-0230.

Heritage Recipe:

Macaroni and Cheese

From the Kitchen of Laura and Bo Duncan

William and Laura Duncan moved to the big white house with the wraparound porch at 436 Oxford Road in 1951. World War II Navy veteran William Duncan had been hired as a civil engineer for the S. B. Church Company after Mr. Church died. Laura, a graduate of Amherst College, had worked in a laboratory in Boston developing latex paint before her marriage. The house was home to the couple's three girls: Terry, Toni and Elizabeth or Bo as she was known, and their brothers Pete and Jim.

The house was in need of many repairs, but located in a wonderful neighborhood for children. The Duncan clan played outside all day long with the Hessler, Crepeau, Schade and DeMaio families. "Our parents let us be kids which was really nice," says Bo. The backyard was planted with a large stand of pine trees and Pete and Jim and their friends quickly learned to leap from one to another. Laura headed upstairs and pretended she didn't know what was going on until the day when Jim grabbed a branch with a hornet's nest. His multiple stings were treated with the family cure all of a bathtub filled with water and Epsom salts. "You can't cry in the bathtub," Laura told them all.

In his free time, William Duncan undertook renovating his home. At one time anyone opening the door could look straight down into the cellar. Old walls came down, and a pile of ancient lathe provided kindling for the evening fire in the fireplace. While preparing to paper the dining room one Valentine's Day, he drew a big heart on the wall that he emblazoned "Laura and Bill." When Bo built her own home on Great Hill Road, she repeated the tradition on her first Christmas there, painting trees

to decorate her new house. They are now covered with paint, but still there in her memory each holiday season. He also created a beautiful yard that ran back to Jack's Brook for his family. Challenged by all the rocks when he wanted a driveway, he enlisted the children to load them into a trailer. Anyone who helped got to drive the tractor to dump them. Fall brought them all out to rake and pile leaves in the back of an S. B. Church truck in return for a ride to the compost heap.

Bo relates that Thursday night the Duncans often had macaroni and cheese for supper. This was because Thursday was piano lesson day. "My two brothers and I each had a half hour lesson after school. While we were all doing that Mom would go grocery shopping but this left no time to make supper once we got home. Macaroni and cheese could be prepared and left in the oven to bake while we were away. Once we got home, out of the oven it came and supper was on the table." Laura Duncan's recipe, derived from her ***Fanny Farmer Cookbook***, follows.



The Duncan Family's Macaroni & Cheese

First make the cream sauce: in a double boiler or heavy saucepan, melt 4 tablespoons of butter. Add 4 tablespoons of flour and blend well over low heat. Add to this 2 cups of milk or milk and cream. Whisk the sauce and bring it slowly to a boil. Cook for 2 minutes stirring constantly. Season with salt and pepper.

Now to make the Macaroni and Cheese:

- Cook a 9 oz. package of macaroni according to pack age directions.
- Put half in a buttered baking dish. Sprinkle it with 1/2 cup of cheddar cheese (or more)
- Add the rest of the macaroni. Sprinkle another 1/2 cup of cheddar cheese (or more) on top.
- Pour in the 2 cups of cream sauce.
- Put 1/2 cup of buttered bread crumbs on top.
- Bake at 400 degrees until brown, 25 – 30 minutes.

If you are going to piano lessons then cook until you get home but at a lower temperature.



Oxford Historical Society, Inc.
2023 Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please check one:

- ☐ Individual Membership \$ 15.00
☐ Family Membership \$25.00
☐ Senior Membership (over 65) \$10.00
☐ Junior Associate (under 18) \$10.00
☐ Business Sponsor \$200.00
☐ Lifetime Membership \$500.00

Please make checks payable to: Oxford Historical Society, Inc.

Mail this form and payment to:

Oxford Historical Society, P.O. Box 582, Oxford, CT 06478

Additional donations are welcome! I am enclosing a donation of \$ _____

Volunteer Opportunities

The OHS needs volunteers to help out with on-going activities and special events. If you would like more information on these opportunities, please check one or more of the boxes below so we can follow up with you:

- ☐ Museum Docent ☐ Fundraising ☐ Curator Assistance
☐ Can & Bottle Recycling Project ☐ Special Events Planning
☐ Community Outreach ☐ Munn Schoolhouse Education Program
☐ Twitchell-Rowland Homestead Preservation Activities

For more information on the Oxford Historical Society and its activities, please visit our website at <https://www.oxford-historical-society.org> or follow us on Facebook.