

Making History Every Day

March & April 2019, Volume 1, Issue 2

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

Twitchell Rowland Homestead Museum

60 Towner Lane, Oxford, CT 06478

Latest News!

At their Jan. 2 special meeting, Oxford selectmen approved the recommendation of the Community Support Committee to allocate \$18,500 for the schoolhouse move from its current site on Route 67 to the OHS campus at 60 Towner Lane. The owner of the little building, Dan Sears, signed a contract with the historical society on Jan. 7. The job will have to be put out to a town bidding process this spring.

The town will pay up to \$18,500 for a mover to transport the Munn Schoolhouse from its current site on Route 67 to the OHS campus at 60 Towner Lane.

By Jan. 10 restoration carpenter Eric Iott of Seymour was able to get into the schoolhouse and stabilized the structure for the coming winter weather. That process involved placing 6 collar beams in the attic; diagonal bracing to the exterior on all four sides; boarding up the window in the attic and removing the shutters from the front windows for storage.

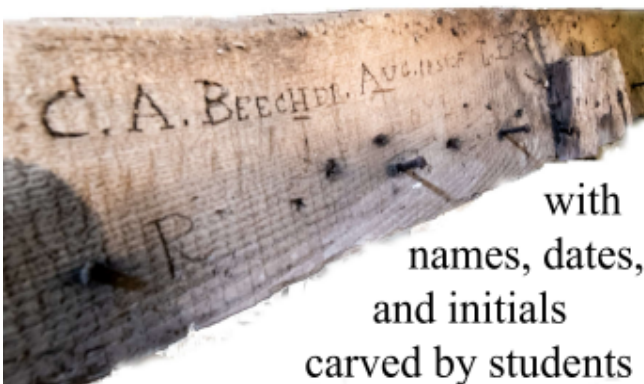


In the coming weeks society representatives will consult with the town building official on the move, seek zoning approval for the location of the schoolhouse and get working on information for the bid for the move and a suggested date for the event.

The society is also working on grant applications for funds from various local organizations to help underwrite the renovations needed after the building is moved.

In support of the grant solicitations, the society is working to complete an application to put the Munn Schoolhouse on the State Register of Historic Places.

Basement Beam from
Mr. Munn's Schoolhouse



A description of Old Oxford in 1854 Feb. 1884, Bridgeport Standard

"Three large and flourishing boarding schools were opened by Deacon R. B. Curtiss on Buck Hill, M. S. Munn, Red City, and David J. McEwen near Quaker Farms. This was no small thing for the town, and the boys of these schools, now many of them well known men scattered all over the country, will never forget the generous hand and heart of Mrs. Curtiss, the pleasant sympathetic voice of Mrs. McEwen, or the rollicking, wild sports enjoyed at M. S. Munn's. On the large wayside rock just north of the village, each passer-by can see to this day many of their names carved and left as memories of those happy days."

Initials and names of students were also carved in to the beams of the schoolhouse, as shown at left.



YOU CAN DIRECT \$25 TO US WITH A SIMPLE CLICK - BEAT THE CLOCK!

Anyone with an account at **ION BANK** is eligible to cast a vote in their annual **Community Awards Program**. One vote per person - but it is worth \$25 which will go to the ONE non-profit designated by each individual. Oxford Historical Society is an eligible community organization. Go to **IonBank.com** and pick us! The program runs through March 31, 2019.

Join the Effort to Preserve Oxford's Historic Rural Heritage

- Follow us on facebook @oxfordhistorical Society.
- Like our Facebook page to let foundations know the Society has your support.
- Join the Historical Society. Download a membership at <http://www.oxford-historical-society.org/membership.pdf>.
- Visit the Homestead and learn more about our activities
- Sign up youth and scout groups for special tours and programs at the Homestead

HOMESTEAD OPEN HOUSE:

- Sunday, March 3, 2-4 p.m.
- Sunday, March 17, 2-4 p.m.
- Sunday, April 7, 2-4 p.m.
- Sunday, April 21, CLOSED - EASTER

Currently the display cases contain a selection of pieced quilts from the collection of member Rob Buck, featuring multiple nine-patch and star variations plus a striking Crazy Quilt. Related items on display include a sewing basket from Marilyn Stebar's collection of family antiques. In addition a stack of previously owned quilt books are available for sale. Stop in for coffee or cocoa and treats. Shop the books pamphlets, notecards and other items available.

This profile of an Oxford Schoolhouse is based on information taken from the files and archives of the Oxford Historical Society.



Exterior of the Bell School, photo by the late Alfred Harger, circa 1930, shows that the Bell School did not have an bell on the roof

BELL SCHOOL, built in 1906 on Holbrook Road, served Joint District 1, the area of Moose Hill on the southeast side of town. The 1932 Oxford Town Report noted Bell School was closed in June 1932 for low enrollment. Miss Parmelee wrote on her short history that the school was burned down Dec. 1937

Miss Parmelee signed a contract with the School Committee to work from Oct. 3, 1918 through July 1919 and earned \$555 for the year. The following description of that school year was her handwritten record: **"History of Bell School Oct. 3, 1918-June 13, 1919"**



Students outside of Bell School, photo by the late Alfred Harger, circa 1930.

School opened in Belle School on October, the third with the scholars,

Joseph Belinsky	age 13	Grade 7
John Belinsky	age 11	Grade 6
Camille Jensen	age 10	Grade 4
Peter Belinsky	age 9	Grade 4
Mary Bobrowsky	age 7	Grade 1
Paul Belinsky	age 7	Grade 1
Joseph Levine	age 10	Grade 2
Alton Jensen	age 6	Grade 2
Edna Hinkson	age 6	Grade 1

October 7 Louise Hinkson age 4 started in but did not continue after October 28 due to the fact that she was too young to do school work and come so far. October 15 Charles Kinney came and has now completed one year and is promoted into Grade 2. All the others except Joseph Belinsky are enrolled, he having left school on May 5 to work on the farm.

October 14 was omitted for a visiting day. I visited Quaker Farms school and surely enjoyed it. Learned a great many things that have been very

beneficial during the past year. Miss Pratt in my estimation is a very good teacher and had and conducted a quiet, industrious, well behaved school room. Again I was given a visiting day, when I visited the Model School at Bethlehem. From this school I learned many things in regards to teaching first and second grades.

Owing to my being unable to come to Belle School on Monday Sept. 30th and coming Wednesday but not teaching until Thursday, three days were lost. These were made up on Saturdays Oct. 5 – 19 – Nov. 2. Five days were lost on account of influenza. From Oct. 21 to Oct. 28. These days were made up Nov. 29 – 30 – Dec. 7 – 14 - 21 -

A list of pieces performed by all the students for a Christmas Program was followed by: After the program a Christmas Tea was enjoyed by all and presents were distributed with coffee and cake and oranges. Mrs. Jensen, Kinney, and Hinkson and children with Mr. Downs made up the audience.

Learn more about the school year in our next issue (May/June).

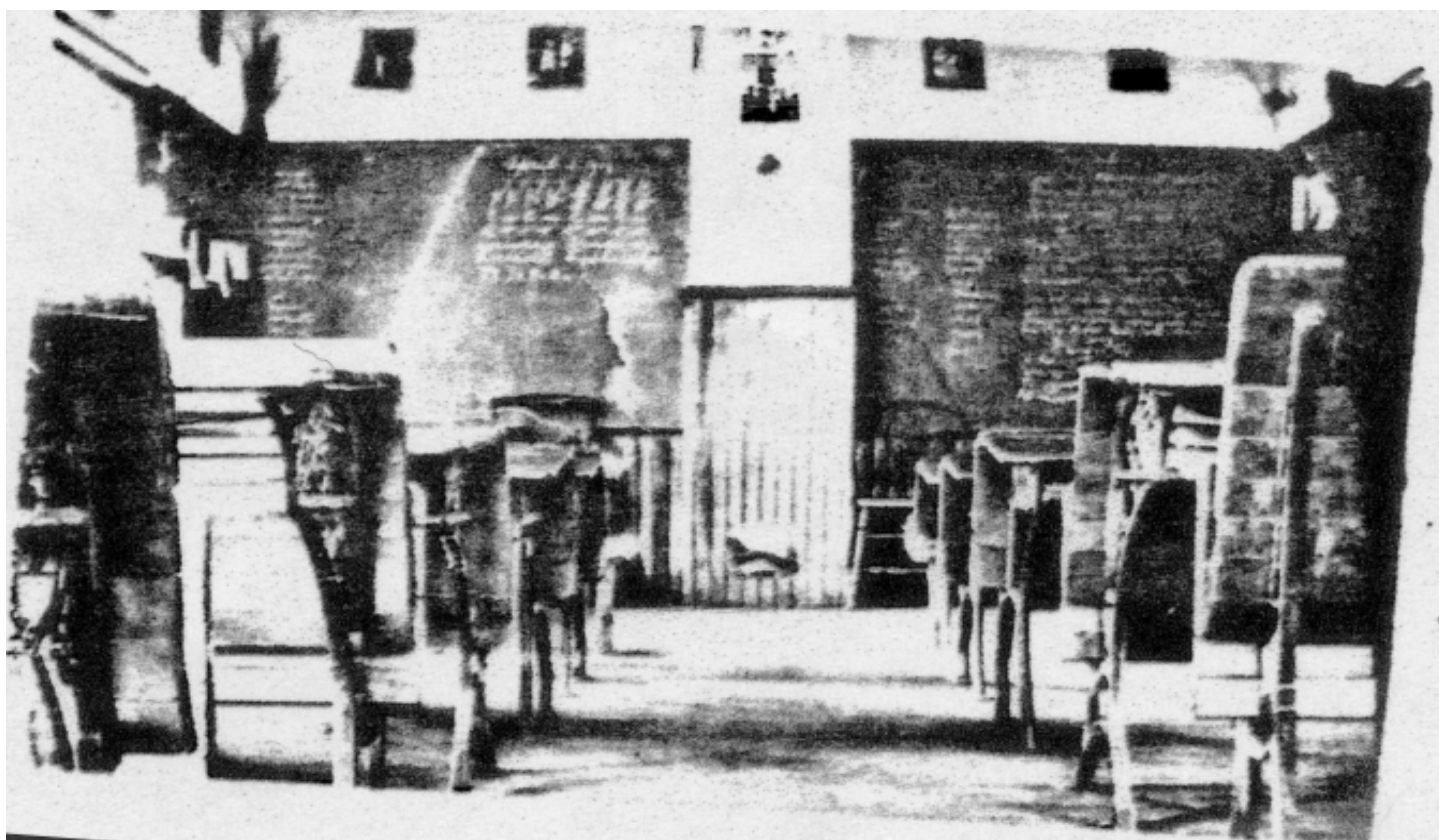


Photo of the interior of Belle School, based on a photo taken about 1920. Note the old-fashioned desks which became popular late in the 19th century, replacing benches with desks attached to the walls on three sides of the room, leaving the students with their backs to the teacher.

COMING SOON...



GIVE LOCAL 2019

- Tuesday, April 23, 8 a.m. through Wednesday, April 24, 7 p.m.
- Annual online giving event through Connecticut Community Foundation.
- Make the most of your donation as there are bonuses and matching funds to help maximize the gifts. Plan NOW to click on Oxford Historical Society and donate online with your credit or debit card.. Go to: <https://www.givelocalccf.org/organizations/oxford-historical-society>



GIVE GREATER 2019 May 1 & 2

Greater New Haven Community Foundation and the Valley Community Foundation sponsor an online giving program for area non-profits. Make an online donation to help support our work on the Munn Schoolhouse. Log onto our donation page at: <https://givegreater.guidestar.org/NonprofitProfile.aspx?OrgId=1056088>

BUDGET REFERENDUM

Date to be Announced: 6 a.m. - 8 p.m.

When you come out to vote on the town's budget, look for the OHS Tent on the grounds of Quaker Farms School. We bring our traveling road show of books, notecards and T-shirts plus we will have info on the new Munn Schoolhouse project.



FIBER FEST 4!

Sat. April 13, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Sun. April 14, noon – 4 p.m.

Kids are fascinated by seeing Ron East with his clippers for live sheep and goat shearing. Adults are lured in to watch weaving on a room sized barn loom re-located from an Oxford house. See crafters carding fleece, try your own hand at spinning yarn. Learn about natural dyes and other details on the fiber arts used by the early Oxford settlers and farmers with hands-on fun for all ages.

This year new crafters are Leslie Alexander demonstrating felting and Naomi Allen sharing rug hooking skills.

Be sure to visit with Jen and Rose East at the spinning wheels. Barbara Rickman planted flax seeds last spring and then harvested a crop of flax – yup it grows in CT. This spring she is sharing what she learned about the fibrous plants and processing them to use for making linen thread for weaving. Linen and linen-wool mixes (linsey-woolsey) were staples.

Fiber crafts are available for sale and tours of the antique saltbox house run regularly.



**FREE ADMISSION
Twitchell-Rowland Homestead**