



Oakland Area Historical Society

AUGUST 2008 NEWSLETTER



OAHS 2008 Officers



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Mike Dennis
Howard Hardy

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Shirley Libby

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Ruth Wood

**Membership Chair
& Newsletter Editor:**
Ramona Freeman



Macartney House Museum Benefits from Ongoing Improvements & Maintenance

Thanks to the generosity and labor of many helping hands and benefactors, we've been able to complete several important projects on the museum over the last few years. Here are some snap shots:

New gardens were planted along the edges of the museum's back lawn in 2005, thanks to a great deal of help from the Waterville Community Garden Club and a small grant from the Central Kennebec Heritage Council. Garden club members provided help with garden design and planting, as well as plant donations. Our sincere appreciation is also extended to members of the garden club for their long-standing and ongoing help with maintenance of our flower gardens.

Our white picket fence was mended and painted in the summer of 2005 by Eagle Scout Candidate Nick Leavitt and the other Boy Scouts he supervised. Nick and his crew did a superb job!

The complete exterior of the Macartney House Museum was scraped, primed and painted, and the windows repaired, re-pointed and glazed in 2006 – 2007. In the fall of 2006, professional painters, Judy Green and Marta Knapp from Poughkeepsie, N.Y., bartered their experience and labor for a month's free lodging at Wheeler's Camps on Salmon Lake in Oakland. This barter was generously arranged by Ruth Wood of Wheeler's Camps. The work was completed in the summer of 2007 at a contracted price by a local professional painter, Donnie Sheets. Hammond Lumber Company donated all of the primer, paint, caulking, and glazing, for which we were most grateful.

Handsome new museum signs on the house and at the roadside were designed, fabricated, and installed by Leighton Signworks of Oakland in 2007. This project was spearheaded by OAHS member, Ramona Freeman.

A garden shed is now being built as an Eagle Scout project by Morgan Davis of Oakland. The new shed will be a wonderful addition and a great asset to us.

We extend our appreciation to everyone who helped. Thank you!

**~ Please see the page back of this newsletter if you'd like to help with
our current need of a newly shingled roof. ~**

New Display!

“Oakland Works”

Our display in progress includes pictures and actual tools, machines, and other items used to produce goods and services on farms, in factories and other businesses, as well as to save labor and improve the quality of life in the home.

If you have display items to donate, please contact Alberta Porter @ 465-7549 or Howard Hardy @ 465-2044.

Come take a look!



Tool Display in Cellar

The Newsletter of the Oakland Area Historical Society

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Submit information and stories for
future newsletters to the Editor:

Ramona Freeman
69 Church Street
Oakland, ME 04963
207/465-2753

Email: freeman2753@roadrunner.com

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the loss of three dear and very pivotal Oakland Area Historical Society members over the last year.

A. Christine Hillman, RN, passed on to the angels of heaven on Monday, November 19, 2007, at her Pond Road home. She was 81 years old.

Christine was proud of her colonial ancestry, having been a member of the local Daughters of the American Revolution, Silence Howard Hayden Chapter, through the service of Abiel Sprague in the first naval battle of the revolution and Matthew Thornton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Christine and her husband, Burns C. Hillman Jr., were founding members of the Oakland Area Historical Society. It was this original group which saved the old Macartney House from destruction, and moved it to its present location.

Elizabeth Jane “Betty” Smith, 86, died Friday, February 1, 2008, at the Thayer Unit of Maine General Medical Center in Waterville.

Betty unselfishly gave to the community for years in many capacities. She was an active member of the Oakland Area Historical Society, in which her husband, Cdr. Raymond D. Smith still participates. Betty’s passion and expertise was in the restoration and preservation of fabrics and the clothing and furnishings made from them. Betty designed many of our current museum displays, including several life-like mannequins.

Barbara T. Wheeler, 90, died Tuesday, April 1, 2008, at Maine General Medical Center in Waterville.

Barbara was a lifelong resident of Oakland, along with her husband, Alfred H. Wheeler, and was very active in town affairs. Barbara was a longtime and founding member of the Oakland Area Historical Society, and was part of the group instrumental in getting the Macartney House moved to its present location.



Membership and Dues Form Enclosed ~ Please join today! ~

If you have already paid your dues for the 2008 calendar year, please help to expand our membership and pass this form on to someone else who shares your interest in Oakland Area history.



*The Macartney House
Museum
2008 Hours & Events*

Macartney House Museum Open – July & August:

Every Wednesday – 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

~ **Alternate times and group tours may be arranged by calling 465-7549.** ~

Oakland Area Historical Society Meetings & Programs – Guests Welcome:

Monday, April 7 at 7:00 p.m. (Williams Elementary School) –
Program: Old Houses in Oakland and Tips on How to Trace Them, by Alberta Porter

Monday, May 5 at 7:00 p.m. (Williams Elementary School) –
Program: A Civil War Poem, shared by Alberta Porter

Monday, June 2 at 7:00 p.m. (Macartney House Museum) –
Program: Highlights of Oakland's History from 1786 to 1815, by Alberta Porter

Monday, July 7 at 7:00 p.m. (Macartney House Museum) –
Program: History of Memorial Hall & Current Restoration Efforts, by Ralph Farnham

Monday, August 4 at 7:00 p.m. (Macartney House Museum) –
Program: *The Oakland Observer*, by Sue Toman

Sunday, September 14 – Special Annual Meeting (Details TBA)

Monday, October 6 at 7:00 p.m. (Williams Elementary School) –
Program: Firsthand Account of the Macartney House Move, by Burns Hillman

Monday, November 3 at 7:00 p.m. (Williams Elementary School) –
Picture History of the Original and the Current Colby College, by Art Ray

Special Events:

Ice Cream Socials, featuring the R.B. Hall Band!

Tuesday, July 15, and Tuesday, August 12, starting at 6:30 p.m.

*These are outside in front of the Macartney House Museum. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy!
Ice cream sundaes will be sold to benefit the museum.*

PLEASE JOIN US!

**The Macartney House Museum is at 25 Main Street, Oakland
(Behind TD Banknorth)**

The Central Kennebec Heritage Council

The Central Kennebec Heritage Council consists of historical museums in Somerset and Kennebec Counties working together to promote interest in the local history of Central Maine and the Kennebec-Chaudière Corridor, and to attract more visitors to the museums. Through cooperative programs, the Council strengthens the services of the museums, calls attention to their collections, and provides visitor activities. The Council expands opportunities for cultural heritage education and in turn, promotes the vitality of Central Maine and its people, past and present.

The member museums of this Council are Fairfield History House Museum; L.C. Bates Museum – Hinckley; Macartney House Museum – Oakland; Margaret Chase Smith Library – Skowhegan; Norridgewock Historical Society Museum; and Victor Grange #49 – Fairfield Center.

Each year the Council has a project in which the museums participate. Last year the topic was “Central Maine Works” and each museum had a display that related to its area. Oakland produced more axe, scythes, and other edge tools than any town on earth from the early 1900’s through the period just after World War II, so of course the Oakland Area Historical Society (OAHS) display was to show what the factories looked like. Under the direction of Howard Hardy, an OAHS Vice-President, we were able to put together a wonderful display. As Howard says, it is a work in progress. We hope to add to this display each year.

If you, or someone you know, has items to donate, please let contact us at the numbers at the bottom of this page. We’d love to add some of the following items to our display, an oak barrel, burlap bags, blacksmith tongs and hammers, mannequins, anvils, tools made in Oakland, and an old desk,

The project this year is “Old Houses and Who Lives in Them.” After completing many hours of research, OAHS President Alberta Porter has put together notebooks reflecting houses built in Oakland during the period from 1786 to 1925, including those buildings on The National Registry. The notebooks include pictures, maps, and profiles of the original owners.

Please visit the Macartney House Museum to enjoy these displays and others during July and August visiting hours on Wednesdays from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Or call us for alternate times and group tours - Alberta Porter, President at 465-7549 or Howard Hardy, Vice-President at 465-2044).



Please visit the Oakland Area Historical Society website at: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mecoakla

Early Transportation in Oakland

by Art Ray

In **1849** the Androscoggin & Kennebec Railroad had come to **Oakland** & Waterville from Lewiston, giving Oakland access to the world. It continued on to Bangor in 1855. The Somerset & Kennebec RR was opened from Waterville to Augusta in 1853, to Fairfield in 1855 and to Skowhegan in 1856. These railroads opened to the local farmers a market far beyond Oakland. Produce now could be shipped to Boston and people could travel about the state on a quickly expanding rail system.

In **1888** another huge step in the way people traveled occurred when the **Waterville & Fairfield Railroad Co.** opened a **3.4 mile horse trolley line** between **Waterville & Fairfield**. Folks in **Oakland** watched this new change in travel with great expectation. The trolley ran hourly from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., with a car leaving from Waterville and Fairfield at the same time. Hourly trolley service compared with trains that often came through Oakland only a few times a day. The horse trolley lasted only four years when in **1892** the trolleys were converted to run on the new phenomenon of *electricity*. A huge success, the **Waterville & Fairfield Railway & Light Co.** trolley line was quickly extended to the Pine Grove cemetery and then later a branch added to Benton in 1898. **Oakland** was linked to the trolley lines when in 1902, the **Waterville & Oakland Street Railway Company** was formed and service to **Oakland** began on **July 2, 1903**. The trolley line expansion to **Oakland** very importantly gave people from Benton, Fairfield and Waterville access to Messalonskee Lake (Snow Pond), especially in the summer months.

Excerpts from the OAKLAND OBSERVER

by Susan Toman

The Dunn Edge Tool Company are being delayed in their works for want of grindstones. One cargo was shipped from Nova Scotia weeks ago, but neither the ship nor cargo has been heard from. A second lot has been started. (11/23/88)

The long delayed grindstones of the Dunn Edge Tool Company have come, 7 carloads, and the workmen of that establishment are happy. (11/30/88)

We extend our congratulations to Postmaster Macartney on the occasion of the raise in his salary. The government has seen him and "gone him one hundred better" to go into effect July 1. The salary is now \$1100. (7/13/88)

The welders in the Dunn Edge Tool Company's works are at work and their whole scythe crew will be at work next Monday. This is more than a month earlier than last year. (9/7/88)

Raspberries are retailing here first hands at twenty cents per quart but buyers are not plenty. (7/20/88)



The Macartney House Museum roof needs to be re-shingled after almost 30 years!

PLEASE HELP!

The roof of the Macartney House Museum is in bad shape and needs to be re-shingled this year. Your help is needed.

Your contribution of any amount would be most appreciated.

Please make your check payable to "Oakland Area Historical Society" with a note that you're donating for the roof repair. Mail your contribution to:
Dick Lord, OAHS Treasurer, 26 Church Street, Oakland, ME 04963

Thank You!