

Making History Every Day

January & February 2019, Volume 1, Issue 1

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

Twitchell Rowland Homestead Museum

60 Towner Lane, Oxford, CT 06478

Mr. Munn's Schoolhouse

561 Oxford Road



This 2008 photo by Cathy Helm, shows Mrs. Ruth Willard, then-owner of the schoolhouse. The building is in need of repairs and has been offered to the Oxford Historical Society for removal to the Twitchell-Rowland Homestead Museum property on Towner Lane. The Society is seeking grants and donations to cover some of the costs of preservation.

News! News ! News!

We are thrilled to announce the Community Support Committee has recommended that the Selectmen approve funding for the project proposed by the Oxford Historical Society at their Dec. 10, 2018 meeting at Oxford Town Hall. The proposal awaits final approval by the Board of Selectmen. Under the plan, the town will use up to \$18,500 for a structural mover to transport the Munn Schoolhouse from its current site on Route 67 to the OHS campus at 60 Towner Lane. The owner of the schoolhouse, Dan Sears, offered the schoolhouse to the Society but they had to take it away.

This will be a multi-stage and more than year-long project as the building has to be carried down Route 67 and under more than 25 overhead wires.



September 28, 2006: The Twitchell-Rowland Homestead was saved from demolition when the Historical Society moved it to land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Rowland on Towner Lane.

We Did It Once Already; With Your Help, We Can Do it Again!

For the Oxford Historical Society this is an encore performance as the museum at 60 Towner Lane was moved from Christian Street back in 2006 in order to save the 200 year old house from demolition. After years of work, the Twitchell Rowland Homestead opened to the public in 2012. It is open to the public for various events and for regularly scheduled Open House Sundays each month.



“ A DO-ABLE PROJECT”

The first step in this tale was a visit from a Circuit Rider from the CT Trust of Historic Places on Dec. 12, 2018. Greg Farmer spent time with Society Vice President Dorothy DeBisschop carefully looking at the interior of the schoolhouse as well as the cellar and the exterior. He also visited the OHS campus at 60 Towner Lane to evaluate the proposed location site.

Circuit riders travel around the state assisting local groups to evaluate the current status of historic buildings and to propose possible projects that would restore them to valuable community assets.

Greg will work with the Historical Society to complete various documents required to apply for funding and to establish the historic worth of the schoolhouse.



The schoolhouse building is 15 and a half feet wide and 24 feet, 8 inches long. It stands approximately 15 and a half feet high and has a loft. It also has a basement space. It has two windows and a door on one side and is clad in clapboards on two sides (there are none on the back side but siding keeps the wall weather tight.) The roof is good and the trim work appears new.

“I was pleased with how much original plaster is still in the schoolhouse.” said Greg. “I am very impressed with the little building and its straight wall and roof lines and good materials.”

Farmer did suggest that, “Removing that tree on the corner of the schoolhouse will definitely make the move a simpler job.” So the Society will be seeking help with taking down the large maple tree. The homeowner is quite willing to have the work done and in fact suggested just that during the visit.

Farmer’s evaluation is that moving and restor-



ing the schoolhouse is a “do-able” project indeed. He is familiar with the Bullet Hill School in Southbury and thinks it is a good model for the Oxford society to follow.

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**BE PART OF THE PROJECT:
DONATE!**

Local donations from the community have always been the strong foundation for projects undertaken by the Oxford Historical Society. We will track our Schoolhouse Fund in this corner of each issue of the Schoolhouse News.

Watch the checks, bills, quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies pile up...

YOUR SUPPORT IS CRITICAL!

**Checks can be mailed to:
Oxford Historical Society
P.O. Box 582
Oxford, CT 06478**

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

**HELP WANTED:
Good Local Tree Service Willing
to Help this Community Project**

Call Dorothy DeBisschop
203-910-4574 or email
dottie@oxford-historical-society.org



Looking for Qualified Help!

We're on the look out for contractors who would be willing to help with the necessary excavation at the Homestead and for construction of the basement/foundation for the relocated schoolhouse. Suggestions may be made by calling :

Dorothy DeBisschop
203-910-4574 or email

dottie@oxford-historical-society.org



SCHOOLHOUSE TRIVIA: Know the answers to these questions?



1. Oxford Center School was dedicated in _____?
1938 - 1948 - 1958?
2. Quaker Farms School is the ___ school to have that name?
2nd - 3rd - 4th?
3. Which school was cut in half and moved by the fire department?
4. Oxford schoolhouses have been farm sheds and gift shops but never a library.
True or False?

Answers on reverse

JOIN THE EFFORT TO PRESERVE OXFORD'S HISTORIC RURAL HERITAGE!

- Follow us on facebook @oxfordhistorical
- Like our Facebook page to let foundations know the Society has your support
- Join the Historical Society. Download a membership for 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.

Oxford's Schoolhouses

With a total of 16 public school buildings at varying times, along with as many as five private schools, Oxford has had schools serving children from one border to another.

Mr. Munn's Schoolhouse was opened after his marriage to Louisa Beardsley, whose father owned the house at 561 Oxford Road. After the marriage, Beardsley expanded his house in order to board students while they attended the private facility.

The school was listed in the 1850 census. Mr. Munn also taught in the public schools, serving in the short-lived High School held in the District One schoolhouse that stood at the corner of Riggs Street and Academy Road.

The information on this schoolhouse and others can be found in the recently published book, *Historic Buildings of Oxford, Past and Present*. Copies of this award winning paperback may be purchased for \$25 at the Oxford Town Hall Town Clerk's office and at the Oxford Historical Society's Twitchell-Rowland Museum.

The new edition of the book on local houses began as a simple summer project planned to update information on the society's previous book *Early Houses of Oxford*. That collection of black and white photos was published in 1976 as a Bicentennial project celebrating the nation's 200th birthday.

Historic Buildings of Oxford Past and Present



Oxford Historical Society
Oxford, Connecticut

The new book sports color photos of each house and entirely rewritten and updated text. The summer project stretched into over a year. But the work was worth the wait and the labor as it was granted an Award of Merit in 2017 by the Connecticut League of Historical Organizations.

COMING SOON OPEN HOUSES AT THE HOMESTEAD

- Sunday, Jan. 6, 2-4 p.m.
- Sunday, Jan. 20, 2-4 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 3, 2-4 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 17, 2-4 p.m.

Winter decorations bedeck the rooms through Jan. 7th. Stop in for coffee or cocoa and treats. Shop the books, pamphlets, notecards and other items available at the Twitchell-Rowland Homestead, 60 Towner Lane. Free admission.

FIBER FEST 4!

Saturday, April 13, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Sunday, April 14, noon – 4 p.m.

A two day celebration of all things fiber. Sheep shearing, weaving, carding, spinning and dying – learn and practice the fiber arts used by the early Oxford settlers and farmers with hands-on fun for all ages.

Twitchell-Rowland Homestead
FREE admission

GIVE LOCAL 2019

Tuesday, April 23, 8 a.m. through Wednesday, April 24, 7 p.m.; annual online giving event through the 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 let your online gift help preserve Mr. Munn's Schoolhouse..

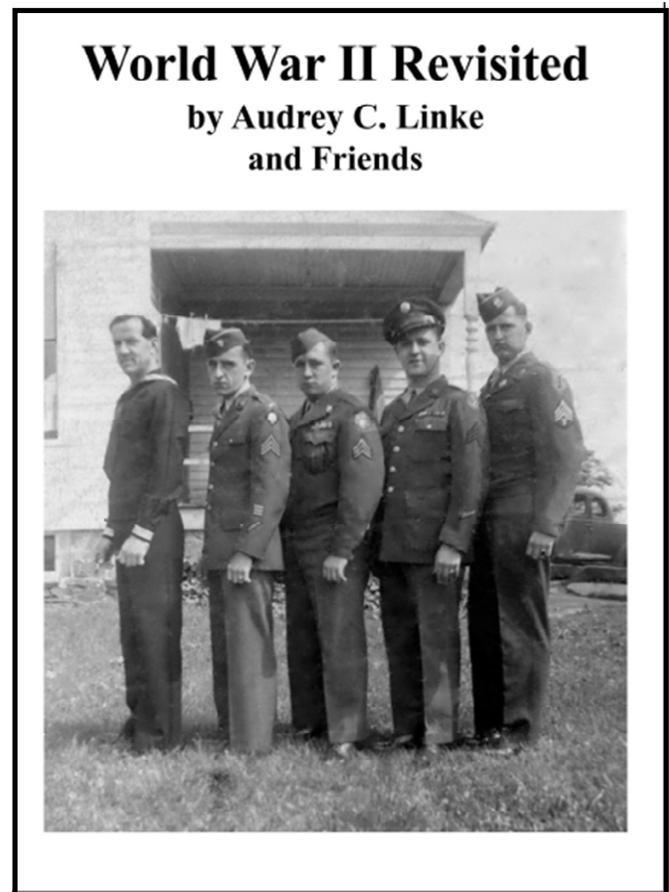
SCHOOLHOUSE TRIVIA ANSWERS:

1. 1948
2. 3rd
3. Oxford Center School #2
4. False. After the present Center School (Center School #3) was built, Oxford Center School #2 was cut in half, the north side housed the town library, a newly built bay in the center housed fire equipment and a classroom became the firemen's hall. The building was demolished in 1998 when the next Oxford Fire House was built.

NEWEST OHS BOOK *WWII Revisited*

The Oxford Historical Society is happy to announce a new book based on the memories of and about local folks in World War II.

Titled *World War II Revisited*, this paperback was completed and edited by Dorothy DeBisschop. The work was begun by her good friend Audrey Cable Linke who was responsible for an earlier book of reminiscences by area war vets. As soon as the first book was out people came to her with more stories to share and she began a new collection. Sadly they were unable to finish the work before her death in 2014.



Recently completed, the new book is available at the Oxford Historical Society Headquarters at the Twitchell-Rowland Homestead Museum at 60 Towner Lane. It is \$15 per copy.

The cover photo is a family photo of four of the Miles sons in uniform with one of their brothers in law. Another brother, David S. Miles who went down on the Dorchester when it sank, is the namesake of the local American Legion chapter. The Legion building on Oxford Road is one of Oxford's old schoolhouses, now in a new life.