

Making History Every Day

July-August 2026 Volume 8, Issue 4

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

Twitchell Rowland Homestead Museum

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

Peach Festival Saturday August 22, 4-7 pm.

Mark your calendar now for the 19th Annual Peach Festival hosted by the Oxford Historical Society at the Great Hill United Methodist Church, 225 Great Hill Road in Seymour.

Homemade peach shortcake will be featured with fresh peaches and whipped cream plus Rich Farm's peach ice cream. Admission will include one serving of dessert. Bottled water, tea and coffee will also be available. Take out is also available and some sugar free fruit is prepared each year but runs out quickly.

This year the Peach Festival display will highlight Oxford's patriots who served either in military or civilian roles during the Revolutionary War. There will be at least 102 men included whose service records and connection with Oxford has been verified, mainly from church and government records. Research will continue to cover the full term of the conflict from 1775 through 1783.

The patriots listed were at one time, either before, during or after the war associated with Oxford or were buried here. The borders of the Parish of Oxford and the Town of Oxford were changed over time. We seek to include all who had a connection with Oxford, whether another community claims their service as well. People from historic Oxford buried in other towns, especially in those cemeteries which were once part of Oxford such as Pines Bridge, Beacon Falls and Great Hill, Seymour, are part of the collection.

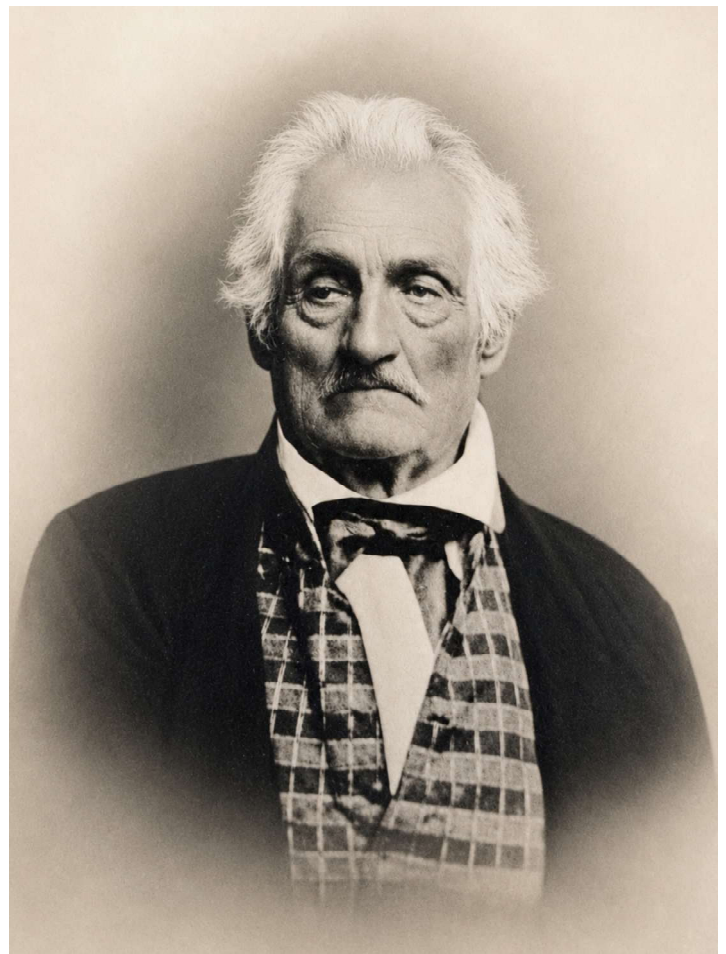
In addition to gravestone photographs, newspaper clippings and historic art works of the American Revolution will be featured. The Peach Festival display will become part of the Historical Society's America 250 collection which will preserve all the records uncovered during our research. Results will be available in print and digital formats when work is completed.

The festival will also offer displays on the Hale-Coleman Peach Farm, formerly located on Great Hill and Peach Farm Roads. Raising peaches was once a major enterprise in Seymour and Oxford.

Those seeking additional information may call 203 888-0230.



Oxford's
Revolutionary
War Patriots



Wilson Hurd, an Oxford Soldier of the American Revolution. (Photo courtesy of Margie Thompson)

This issue commemorates the Revolutionary War era service of the many patriots of Historic Oxford, Connecticut. On page two we include the results of ongoing research into their lives and service. The service records of all the Historic Oxford Patriots will be preserved for future researchers at the Oxford Historical Society. Results of the research will be documented and published when complete.

See full story on page 3

Library Talk to Highlight Oxford's Revolutionary Graves: Nobody Knew How Many We Have

Oxford Town Historian Dorothy DeBisschop will speak at the Oxford Library on Thursday, August 13, at 6 p.m. about Oxford's Revolutionary patriot graves. The program will be open to the public but registration at the Library (or at their website) is recommended.

The Oxford Historical Society conducted extensive research on local patriots for our America250 project. We began with the research available in 1976 based on the 1960's Litchfield-Hoyt history of Oxford which listed 12 Oxford men who served in the Revolution.

With the development of internet sites which carry genealogy and military history, including federal projects to provide digital access to records, our list expanded. To date the Society has researched 104 men who served the patriot cause either in the military or in civilian service for the war effort.

The program will share some of the interesting personal stories we have found during the research.

Green Thumb Volunteers at Work!

Visitors to the Twitchell Rowland Homestead recently will have noticed that the garden at the front of the house has had a remarkable facelift. Gone are the burdocks and other weeds. Perennials that were running amok have been tamed into neat rows. The needy soil has been amended with a dose of composted manure, thanks to a delivery from our neighbor, Charlie Rowland. Behind the house, a lovely bed of herbs, now home to sage, thyme and savory, has appeared in the center of a rectangle of memorial bricks.

The Oxford Historical Society would like to express our gratitude to Elaine McKinney and Kate MacKinney for their expertise, vision, and hard work that made our gardens a pleasure to visit. Thank you both! More volunteers are welcome. There are people at the Homestead most Wednesday mornings.



Open House: July 19, August 2 and 16. Each month on the first and third Sunday from 2 to 4 pm the Twitchell-Rowland Homestead is open to the public. Docents chat about the history of the house and the items found inside as well as other topics of interest to the community. Admission is free, all ages welcome.

Books produced by the Society are available for purchase as well as unique notecard sets created using local art and photographs. Proceeds benefit the society's events and activities plus maintenance of the buildings and grounds.

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WHO'S THAT? A HISTORY OF OXFORD ROAD NAMES

Titus Lane no longer exists, but at one time it was in Oxford near the junction of Moose Hill Road and Holbrook Road, now known as Great Hill Road. The boundaries have shifted between Seymour and Oxford over the years, and Town Historian Dorothy DeBisschop believes that Titus Lane is currently Seymour's Cemetery Road. The intersection of Titus Lane and Holbrook Road was called "Tite's Corners."

Titus, for whom the road and the junction were named, was born in 1752, a Black slave in community leader and patriot Captain John Holbrook's household. Holbrook had four sons who served in the American Revolution: John, Philo, Nathaniel and Abel. Titus wished to join them and fight for the colonial cause as well, but with the young men away at the war, Titus was needed to run Holbrook's substantial farm.

Captain Holbrook struck a deal with Titus. If he stayed and worked at Holbrook's large property, when the war ended his master would free him and grant him land of his own. Titus remained in service to the Captain until the peace treaty was signed, and Holbrook kept his word. Titus was freed and given a plot of land east of the intersection of Titus Lane and Holbrook Road where he is supposed to have built a small house.

Town Historian Dorothy DeBisschop provided information for this article, and her book **Historical Personalities of the Lower Naugatuck Valley** offered much of the information. An additional source used was Norman Litchfield and Sabina Connolly Hoyt's **The History of the Town of Oxford, Connecticut, c1960**.



On Display: Fibers in Captivity—A wide range of fiber products with expanded information on growing and using the various resources fill the two display cases. How flax stems get made into linen thread; cotton in a plant; silk worm cases and more are among samples from the collection of society member Linda Scinto, used in her college level fiber arts classes where she explored these examples as she used them as teaching materials.

Honoring Oxford's Revolutionary War Era Patriots

The Oxford Historical Society has coordinated research on Oxford people who served the American cause during the Revolutionary War. Our list now includes 104 patriots whose service record and connection with Oxford has been verified mainly from church and government records.

Of these 94 provided military service, and five of them made the ultimate sacrifice. We also list ten who provided non-military service, such as serving on the Committees of Inspection. Research will continue to cover the full term of the conflict from 1775 through 1783.

The patriots listed were at one time, either before, during or after the war associated with Oxford or were buried here. The borders of the Parish of Oxford and the Town of Oxford were changed over time. Most lived within Oxford Parish before the town was separated from Derby along with parts of Waterbury, Woodbury and Southbury. Some were associated with the Oxford Presbyterian Church created by the Colonial Legislature and became known as the Great Hill Society. We seek to include all who were associated with historic Oxford, whether or not another community claims their service as well. People from historic Oxford buried in other towns, especially those cemeteries which were once part of Oxford, such as Pines Bridge, Beacon Falls, Gunntown and Great Hill are part of the collection.

Five who died in the fight for freedom:

- Caleb Chatfield (Died at Brandywine)
- John Fairchild (Died at Fort-Washington)
- Jabez Thompson (Died at Kip's Bay)
- John Ufford (Died at Valley Forge)
- David Wheeler (Died October 28, 1777)

Eighty-Seven More Historic Oxford Patriots With Documented Military Service.

- Abraham Bassett
- Captain Isaac Bassett
- Edward Bassett
- Lieut. John Bassett, Jr.
- John Bassett, Sr.
- Bassett, Toby, [Wooster's freed slave] enlisted under the name Tobias Pero.
- Martin Beebe
- Abraham Beecher
- Isaac Beecher
- Andrew Bostwick
- Eliphas Bradley
- Sgt. Justus Bristol
- Ebenezer Buckingham
- William Bunnell
- William Burr



- Ezra Butler
- Caleb Candee
- Daniel Candee
- Gideon Candee
- Captain Job Candee
- Nehemiah Candee
- Samuel Candee
- Daniel Canfield
- Reuben Canfield
- Collins Chapman
- Capt. Daniel K. Chatfield
- Dan Chatfield
- Isaac Chatfield
- John F. Chatfield
- Oliver Chatfield
- Thomas Chatfield
- Capt. Thomas Clark
- Jeremiah Durand
- John Dutton
- Mathan Fairchild
- Ezra Foote
- Amoz Fox (or Fot)
- John Garrett
- John Griffin
- Stephen Hall
- Elijah Harger
- Silas Hawkins
- Capt. Joseph Hicock, Jr. (Hickcock)
- Abel Holbrook
- Capt. John Holbrook
- Nathaniel Holbrook
- Lieut. Levi Hotchkiss
- Wilson Hurd
- Jeremiah Johnson
- Mathaniel Johnson
- Phineas Johnson
- Timothy Johnson
- Jeremiah Kelley
- William Kinney
- James Leach
- Eleazur Lewis, Jr
- Elijah Lewis
- Philo Lewis
- Joseph Lines
- Linus Lounsbury (widow Prudence)
- Truman Loveland
- Johnathan Lyman
- Gideon Northrop
- David Peck
- Ethiel Perkins
- Ebenezer Plant
- Jabez Pritchard
- John Riggs
- Moses Riggs
- Uri Scott
- Thomas Sharp
- Christopher Smith
- Jesse Smith
- Thomas Solley
- Alexander Sperry
- Abner Tibbals
- Benjamin Tomlinson
- Elihu Trowbridge
- Levi Trowbridge
- Daniel Tucker, Jr.
- Ensign Gideon Tucker
- Zephaniah Tucker
- William Vose
- Bowers Washburn
- Moses Wheeler
- Sgt. Daniel Wilmot
- Samuel Wire
- Hezekiah Wooden
- Moses Wooster
- Thomas Wooster

Also, Ten Historic Oxford Patriots With Documented Civilian Service.

- John Bassett, Sr.
- Rev. David Bronson
- Justus Candee
- Joseph Canfield
- John Dutton
- Capt. Zechariah Hawkins
- Ebenezer Riggs
- Noah Tomlinson
- Reuben Tucker
- Samuel Wheeler

The Society has more names we continue to research to see if they qualify for listing above. Those who do will be added to the above list. The service records of all the Historic Oxford Patriots will be preserved for future researchers at the Oxford Historical Society. Results will be documented and published.

Oxford Nature and Arts Festival

On Sunday June 7, 10 am to 4 pm was a celebration of Oxford's Main Street Project. Sponsored by the Oxford Land Trust, OMSP and the Oxford Arts Council, there were tables and booths of fine arts and quality crafts on display and available for purchase; musicians and food trucks, a morning walk and reptile demonstration. The Oxford Historical Society was one of a selection of local non-profit groups that shared information on their activities. An online auction included three unique collections donated by the Historical Society thanks to gift cards provided by supporting Oxford crafters, retailers and restaurants. This second festival was a free event, no admission was charged. Parking was available across Route 67 at the Town Hall complex.

Help Us Make More History as the Oxford Historical Society's America/250 Project documents the lives and records of Oxford's veterans of the American Revolution for preservation. The dozen local volunteers of all ages have researched period records in print and online. With the better weather this summer, efforts have shifted to locating veterans' headstones in local cemeteries.



Using the newly verified and expanded information, people will be needed to expand records: photographers, readers and writers, video/sound recorders and tombstone cleaners and more.

America/250 may offer volunteers options for fulfilling community service, Eagle or Gold Scout, or Capstone project requirements. History buffs are especially welcome. Membership in the Oxford Historical Society is not required. Interested persons may call Dorothy DeBisschop at 203 910-4574.

Join the Effort to Preserve Oxford's Historic Rural Heritage

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

DO YOU HAVE A CD PLAYER in your closet that you would like to unload? The Oxford Historical Society is looking for a small working CD player to provide background music for Homestead events. If you have one you'd like to donate, please contact Nancy Farnum at 203 888-0230. Thank you.



We appreciate gifts of any amount. Community support preserves our history and prepares us for the future.

- Online gift through our website <https://www.oxford-historical-society.org>,
- Online gift through our Facebook page @oxfordhistorical or
- Checks mailed to the Oxford Historical Society P.O. Box 582, Oxford, CT 06478

Oxford Heritage Recipe **HELEN SAVAGE**

Although she was born in Milford, Helen Savage considers herself a true resident of Oxford through and through. When she was about two, her father became concerned that fast-growing Milford was turning into a city and wasn't safe for his growing family. At first, they rented in Oxford from Mr. Schiavi but later rented a home at what is now the corner of Tilquist and Quaker Farms Roads where Helen and her 7 brothers and sisters grew up.

When her children were small, Helen's mother, Eileen, was a homemaker, but as the family grew older, she became a pastry chef at Anthony's Restaurant in Shelton, creating hors d'oeuvres, appetizers and desserts. Helen worked as her assistant on weekends. Money she and her siblings Patty, Michael, Cathy, Susan, Wendy, Theresa, and Mary Ann earned went into the family "pot" to finance things they all needed.

Helen's dad, Patrick, was a foreman at Hershey Metals in the Valley. During the 1955 Flood, he was one of the last to leave the building, taking any employees left behind up to the roof. At home, his family watched in awe when the black and white television showed their dad and his friends being rescued by helicopter! Sadly, he passed away at age 56. The children found even more jobs outside their home, helping their mother to support the family. Cows, chickens, rabbits and a big garden helped feed everyone. Like other Oxford families, they canned and froze their vegetables to see them through the winters.

Helen's growing up years in Oxford were happy and busy. She attended Center School through 8th Grade

and then went on to Southbury High School, graduating in 1966. Her best friend was her neighbor, Valerie Treat, now Valerie Nelson. In their teens, Valerie's father, Bob Treat, got them involved in the Grange, driving them to other towns to square dances. The girls not only had fun but got so good at the steps that they became teachers. Val and Helen also joined 4H, working hard on sewing and crafts for the annual Fair and proudly coming home with fistfuls of ribbons.

At 17, Helen's first job after graduation came through neighbor Foster Sperry, who got her work at Rasbach Photo Company. Later she moved on to the purchasing department at Farrell's. After marrying Tommy Joy and having little John, she stayed home to raise her son until 1977 when she found a job at the Oxford Public Works Department, then sited in Oxford Center where the Center Fire Department and Ambulance Corps are now located. Helen thought the world of the men at Public Works. She baked birthday cakes for them and the younger guys called her "Mom."

The Blizzard of 1978 brought a big adventure for Helen and John. Public Works Foreman Charlie Lyons called Helen in to work dispatch as the crews struggled to keep the roads open. Then Governor Ella Grasso put out a plea for volunteers with snowmobiles to rescue people stranded in the snow. Helen went home, picked up 7-year-old John, and the two of them went out on their vehicle to assist.

In 2018, Helen's second husband, John Savage, called her frantically at work. "Look at that black sky,"



On Tuesday, May 15, 2018 an EF-1 tornado touched down in the Southford area with winds that reached between 86 to 100 mph and ripped out trees and power lines. It left a path of destruction and residents in both Oxford and Southbury with no power.

Repairs took days. There were 38 trucks from Eversource in Oxford working to restore power. Oxford emergency crews and Public Works worked 24/7 cleaning up the debris.

Above photo from VOICES, shows a tree crashed onto a car parked at the Oxford Town Hall.

he said. "Get out of there!" Helen was the last one out of the Town Garage but tore home where she and her family sheltered in the cellar through the tornado. A tree went down on their house, but Helen headed back to her job where she fielded calls from residents desperate for help, sending out the road crew to help where they could. Later, she retired from the job after 41 years.

Helen was a member and a president of the Quaker Farms Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary. She says they did a lot for the town, working together with other fire companies to help at carnivals and hosting puppet shows for the kids at Christmas time. She ended our interview by speaking warmly of her neighbors and friends here. "I love Oxford," she says. "It is the best place to grow up and the best place to live."

Her recipe comes from her former father-in-law, Redmond Joy's, cousin Mary Jackson, from Ireland. When Redmond died, Mary came to visit and shared her recipe for Irish Raisin Bread. Helen says it quickly became a favorite of family and friends.

IRISH RAISIN BREAD

- 4 cups Hecker's Flour or other all-purpose flour of your choice
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 to 2 ½ cups milk (regular)
- ¾ box raisins
- 1/8 tsp. salt



Mix all dry ingredients together thoroughly. Beat egg. Add to ½ cup milk

Add mixture to dry ingredients including raisins. Then add remainder of milk, enough to make sure all ingredients are moistened. There is no kneading. Just mix with a large spoon. Bake in a greased 12-inch cast iron skillet or frying pan at 375 degrees for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake another 30 minutes. Allow to cool. Enjoy.

OHS membership is due for renewal for 2026 and the rates have not changed! Forms can be downloaded at the OHS website. Mail forms and checks to OHS, PO Box 582, Oxford, CT 06478. Individual memberships are \$15, Seniors and Junior Associates (under 18) \$10, Families \$25 and Business Supporters (\$200).

Member dollars help with society expenses and activities, and the numbers of members are used by grant givers as an indication of involvement with the community. Also listed are opportunities for volunteering. Be sure to check those that appeal to you. Being a member really counts for us!

Sat. August 22, 4 - 7 p.m.

Annual Oxford Historical Society



PEACH FESTIVAL



**Featuring photos & videos
honoring Oxford patriots
in the American Revolution**



**Also featuring photos, maps and stories of the
Hale Peach Farm in Oxford and Seymour.**

**Build your own peach shortcake with
homemade biscuits with Rich Farm ice cream.**

**Great Hill United Methodist Church
Great Hill Road, Seymour, at the Rotary, Rt. 188**