

**Join Us at This Year's Annual Meeting**

All Museum members and guests are invited to attend the **2016 Annual Meeting** and presentation of the **Douglas Hanks Preservation Awards.**

**5:30 p.m., Friday, June 10**  
**Parish Hall of the Church of the Holy Trinity**

Officers and board members will be elected, and a report will be presented about the board's work with Stuart Parnes to develop a strategic plan for the Museum.

Come and enjoy delicious appetizers and beverages and fellowship with friends and neighbors.

**RSVP to the Museum at (410) 226-0191 by June 6.**

### Successful 2015 Annual Fund Drive

The Oxford Museum conducts two major fundraising campaigns each year: Membership in June and Annual Giving in November. This year's Annual Giving Campaign was very successful, with more than \$15,000 raised. We are very grateful for the consistent support of our more than 400 members who recognize the significance of the Museum and are very generous. The funds from these two campaigns cover the general operating expenses for the Museum.

#### THE OXFORD MUSEUM, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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#### The Oxford Historian

Editors: Rebecca Gaffney, Ellen Anderson

Contributors: Pat Jessup, Steve Goldman, Earl Sheck, Marguerite Owen Webster, Gordon Graves



The Oxford Museum, Inc.

*A special place.  
A special heritage.*

100 South Morris Street  
PO Box 131  
Oxford, MD 21654

Spring 2016

# The Oxford Historian

1683

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### Museum Opens with New Exhibits

This year the Museum will host three new exhibits, two beginning Oxford Day: the fourth and final phase of the "Oxford at War" exhibit, and a special exhibit on the work of native Oxford artist, Ted Hanks. The third exhibit, "Mapping Oxford," will open later in the summer.

■ **OXFORD at WAR—Korea to Iraq** will feature period photographs and biographies of many Oxford area residents (and their close relatives) who served in the military from 1950 through to the present day.

Dramatic original headline newspapers will be on exhibit to highlight the most important events that defined this era in our nation's history.

Other original memorabilia on display will include a Vietnam era dress uniform (Lt. Bob Lonergan), a Vietnam era nurse's uniform (Lt. Connie Vaught), a U.S. Navy mess kit (actually used by Bill Dial, Capt. USN, Ret.), and MUCH MORE.

Don't miss this opportunity to take a trip back in time to see some of our present-day Oxford personalities as they looked 40 plus years ago!

■ The **MAPPING of OXFORD** exhibit that follows later this summer will display one of the Museum's most important artifacts, the 1707 "fair plat of the Town w<sup>th</sup> the Course and Distance and quantity of Land Contained in every particular Lott Street Lane and Allie fairly drawn upon parchment" required by the Maryland General Assembly. The 1707 survey will be accompanied by various exhibits showing the growth of Oxford from a small spot on the map to a bustling



Bill Dial, (and helicopter) during the Vietnam War



U.S. Navy nurse's uniform worn by Connie Vaught during the Vietnam War era



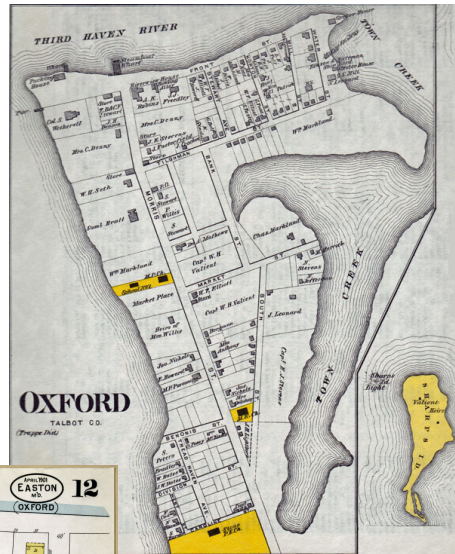
Decorative 1952 "Certificate of Appreciation for Service in the Korean War" given to Cpl. Joseph Zahorbenski by the South Korean government

(Continued on inside left panel)



*The Mapping of Oxford, continued*

town in the late 19th century. Included as part of the exhibit will be newly acquired Sanborn Insurance Maps of Oxford showing street and building level detail of Oxford from the mid-19th century through the early 20th century. The Museum acquired digital copies of these maps from the Library of Congress and is exploring ways to make these available to those members of the Oxford Museum who are interested in learning more about their particular piece of this extraordinary town.



ABOVE:  
An 1877 chart showing the whole town

LEFT:  
A 1901 chart showing a portion of the town (there are four of these charts making up the town)

## Tribute to an Oxford Artist: Ted Hanks

by Marguerite Webster (First cousin of Ted Hanks)

On Oxford Day the Museum opens with a special exhibit of the life and works of native Oxford artist, Ted Hanks. The centerpiece of the exhibit is a large portrait by Peter Hanks of his father, Ted. Ted recently died at his home in Jefferson, Maine, at the age of 94. He is the last of his generation of native Oxfordians, by lineage a distinguished son of Talbot County and Oxford, and a very talented and well-known artist whose subjects most often were the wildlife and sailing craft of the Eastern Shore.

Ted was a member of the Oxford “Parsons” clan, a group whose annual reunions still number about 50, even though the last person whose family name was “Parsons” died in the 1970s.

Ted’s mother was Margaret Stevens Parsons, who founded the Oxford Library. On his mother’s side, he was a descendant of four distinguished early Oxford and Talbot County families: Benson, Stevens, Markland and Parsons. The Stevens family owned the Oxford Neck, including the area of the Town of Oxford before the town existed and was instrumental in having the site which is now the Town designated as an official Port of Entry in Maryland, the only one on the Eastern Shore. The Marklands were early settlers in the new town – a Markland was one of the three recipients of memorial rings in the will of Robert Morris, Sr. There is a widely printed map of Oxford dated around 1870 that shows a very large number of town lots owned by the Markland family.

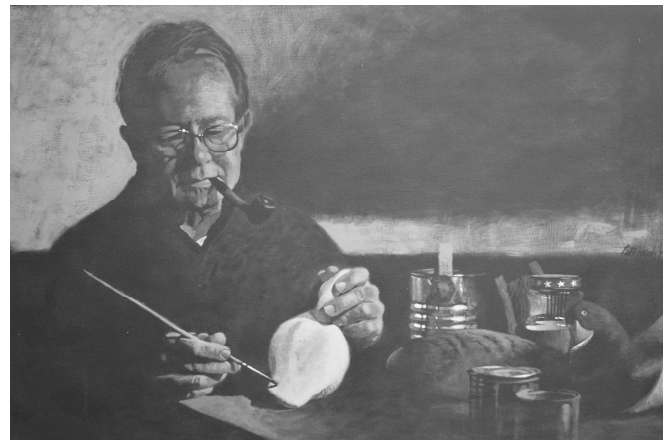
Ted’s father, Fletcher Hanks, Sr., was the son of Oxford’s Methodist minister. Much of Ted’s artistic talent came from his father. Unfortunately, his father provided little else. He was a drinker and a wife-abuser who refused to work at anything other than his art, relying on his mother’s income from a trust to pay his way in the world, and totally abandoning his family (wife and four children) when his mother’s death cut off that source of income. As a consequence, Ted’s mother found it necessary to take a position as governess to one of the DuPont families, and Ted, as the youngest of the four, was to a large extent raised by his mother’s parents, Ed and Margaret Stevens Parsons. Margaret “Maggie” Stevens was born in 1861 on Anderton Farm on the Oxford Road, then owned by her grandfather, Peter Stevens. Later, her father and mother moved the family to Evergreen Farm, then lived on and farmed Sharp’s Island for a number of years. When her mother, a Markland, inherited substantial property in Oxford on the death of her parents, the family moved to Oxford and built Maplehurst on South Street. Margaret was then able to attend school in Oxford for several years and then normal school in Baltimore. She taught school for a couple of years on the western shore, then returned to Oxford to marry Ed Parsons, living in the house they built at 103 N. Morris Street until her death in 1960.

Ed Parsons, the son of Susan Benson and Tom Parsons, was born on the other side of the Tred Avon River. When Ed was quite young, his father, Tom, was kicked by a mule and died at the age of 42, leaving his widow with eight children. Luckily Ed’s mother had a brother, known in the family as “Uncle Billy Benson” who owned a shipyard in Oxford and lived at “Jena” just outside the town. He moved the entire family to Oxford where Ed’s mother, Susan, ran a boarding house. The family prospered.

Ed Parsons was blessed with artistic talent, which his grandson Ted inherited. Ed ran a ship chandlery shop in Oxford and Ted spent a great deal of time there, learning from his grandfather the art of carving waterfowl. Ed’s decoys were in great demand from hunters, as his father Tom’s decoys had been. The Talbot County Historical Society recently sponsored an exhibition of Ed Parsons and his decoys in Easton, and the Oxford Museum has several on permanent exhibit.

Ed Parsons also taught all three of the Hanks boys (Doug, Sr., Fletcher, and Ted) how to sail at a time when motor boats had just become widely available and most sailors, both for sport and for livelihood, had abandoned sailing for motoring. Consequently, when sailing again became popular, the Hanks brothers were formidable competitors.

After attending Oxford’s schools, Ted enrolled at a school of naval architecture in New York. As a consequence, he (and the rest of his class) found themselves “in the Navy now” following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Ted chose to remain in the Navy as a career, serving in Japan during the U.S. occupation and in Vietnam, where he commanded a river patrol boat, as well as many posts in the United States.



Ted Hanks painting one of his decoys

Throughout his life, he built upon the artistic talent he inherited and his work became widely known and treasured. Here in Talbot County, Ted’s work was an important part of the founding of the annual Waterfowl Festival in Easton. For many years, until ownership of the inn, the large bar at Easton’s Tidewater Inn was called the “Decoy Bar” and featured Ted’s work as well as a large portrait of Ted painted by his son, Peter – another talented artist in the Hanks family, who also grew up in Talbot County and has

spent most of his life here. Until very recently – again, because of a change in ownership - the Tavern at the Robert Morris Inn featured a number of Ted’s wall-mounted large carvings of sailboats and waterfowl. A number of years ago, the Ward Museum in Salisbury featured an exhibit, curated by Larry Myers, of “Three Generations of Decoy Carvers” in the Parsons family, a tribute to Ed Parsons, Ted Hanks and Doug Hanks, Jr.

In mid-life, Ted met and married another very talented artist, Consuelo Hanks. She had grown up in Maine and owned a farm there, inherited from her parents. Nevertheless, Ted and Consuelo also owned a home in Oxford and spent substantial time here and sold many works of art through local shops.

The exhibit in tribute to Ted will remain in situ throughout the 2016 Museum season.



Ted and Consuelo Hanks

## PBS Preview Tilghman Waterman’s Museum Film



“Women”

Photo courtesy of [www.tilghmanmuseum.org](http://www.tilghmanmuseum.org)

Our friends at the Tilghman Waterman's Museum recently completed a new video “Tilghman Tales: Building Boats, Lives and Memories on the Chesapeake Bay.” It will air as part of MPT's 2016 Chesapeake Bay Week on PBS on Thursday, April 28, at 9 a.m.

Produced by the Museum and created by Jennifer Shea and Peter Carroll Productions, the video is a collection of stories of island notables, several generations of boat builders, and

women watermen. It promises to be another success in their series about life on Tilghman Island and may give us ideas on how to use the video and oral history in the Oxford Museum’s collection to create a video of “The Way We Were.”

## Museum Future Fund Update

As you know the Museum Board has authorized the creation of a quasi-endowment fund to be used at the Board’s discretion. Thanks to several friends and board members we now have \$30,000 which has been invested in interest-bearing bonds.

Going forward we would like to see the fund grow, and we ask that you consider a donation. Tax deductible IRA rollovers to 501c3 organizations did not expire in December 2015 as planned, but have been made permanent. Free from Federal tax and income tax, those 70-1/2 or older can make direct transfer of up to \$100,000 from traditional and Roth IRA’s to public charities, including the Museum. We would be delighted to accept the RMD that someone doesn’t want to add to their taxable income this year or at any time in the future.

## Volunteers Needed!

The Oxford Museum has need for a few more docents. It’s an enjoyable opportunity to greet visitors to Oxford, see many of your friends and refresh your knowledge of Oxford’s history. No experience is needed, and we will provide training. Most docents work six hours a month and can select their own work days. It’s a fun opportunity to give back to this amazing village in which we live!