

DOUGLAS HANKS JR. PRESERVATION AWARD

Nominations are still being accepted to recognize extraordinary efforts by individuals and organizations in preserving the unique history and heritage of Oxford. The annual award celebrates restoration and renovation, service in preservation, stewardship and lifetime contributions.



Many more details and the nomination form can be found on the [Museum website](#). Nomination forms are due by April 30, 2021

WHAT'S IN YOUR ATTIC?

"I have an Oxford treasure that came from Miss Louise in her Towne Shoppe," claims Pat Wheaton, who emailed the Museum after our last newsletter asked the question, "What's in your attic?"



Thank you, Pat! This is awesome! Many Oxfordians remember Miss Louise and the Town Shoppe with such fondness. How fun to see this treasure.

Check out the corners of your attic or basement. What relics of Oxford's past lie within, just waiting to be discovered to teach and entertain us?

STAYING IN TOUCH

Connect with us through any museum contact and follow us on social media!

- CALL US** 410-226-0191
- EMAIL** theoxfordmuseum@gmail.com
- WEBSITE** www.oxfordmuseummd.org
- FACEBOOK** @OxfordMuseumMD
- INSTAGRAM** @oxfordmuseummd



President's Message SPRINGING INTO THE BACKYARD

We welcome Spring wholeheartedly this year. And we welcome the end of this pandemic as more and more people are vaccinated. Life will soon return to the social hub it always was in Oxford with folks eating out and eating in and gathering with friends and family. Glorious!

The Museum has been in full swing by creating fun and interesting activities and window exhibits since our last newsletter. Our Valentine display was a huge success with so many couples donning our window. Their stories of courtship and togetherness were inspiring. The "Great 2021 Oxford Scavenger Hunt" posted weekly on the Museum door since February has also been a hit. We hope you can stop by on April 24th at noon for the awards ceremony in front of the Museum. And be sure to browse the current Museum windows and take the time to remember Oxford Day and learn some of its history as shown in our new exhibit.

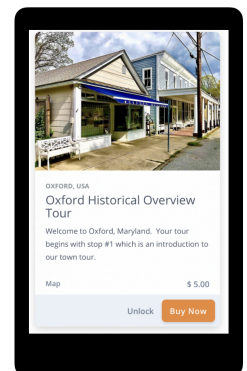
New glass windows will be installed this Spring as well, thanks to an Exterior Façade grant and the volunteer installers, Jeff Fellows, Jay Heim and Stuart Parnes. The current windows are more than 60 years old.

And, oh yes! The museum has had a pandemic nap and plans for reopening the building have not been decided as of yet. Please stay tuned. However, we are making BIG plans to have part of the Museum OUTSIDE. We are in the process of renovating the long forgotten and neglected backyard. You may have seen the new "dependency" (shed) that we erected in December. Well, we have a landscape plan to go with it that will feature rotating, outdoor displays. We will be doing some active fundraising, so be sure to read on for more particulars! We have already received a challenge grant of \$10,000 from a very generous Museum member. We hope you'll join the cause as well. Signage with plans will be erected shortly.

And finally, our Oxford Historical Audio Tour is out there. [Email](#) the Museum for your free members' only code and enjoy over 30 stops in Oxford with audio stories and photos, all available on your smartphone.

We just can't seem to sit still. There's always something going on at the Museum. See you in the backyard!

Julie Wells, President



DIGGING IN THE GARDEN

Getting your garden ready in Oxford can bring more than just the pleasure of spring flowers and a summer crop—you could find some treasures!



These Morris Street treasures found this month may be interesting... but we don't think they are treasures from one of Jeremiah Banning's merchant ships.

AN OXFORD GLORY



The 2020 Crab Skiff National Championship. (Photo by Paul Denbow)



Before and after restoration.



Sid Campen and John Pepe, the deal makers.

Exhibit News FUN IN THE WINDOWS DISPLAYS

Oxfordians of all ages engaged in our two winter exhibits that have just come down, and we expect you did too. The Oxford Valentines window display shared the secret love stories (the short version of how they met) of more than 30 couples in our little village. Thank you to the bold partners who shared their bond of many years in photos and personal stories.

The Great 2021 Oxford Scavenger Hunt was also a huge success and will conclude with an awards ceremony in front of the Museum on April 24th at noon. Come watch as we celebrate over 40 competitors who walked the town through rain, snow, sleet and high winds, to identify over 100 images of Oxford's fine details.

While the treasured tradition of Oxford Day had to be canceled for the second year in a row, as we follow COVID pandemic protocols, the Museum decided to showcase this loved event and a bit of its zany history in our April window display.



Be sure to see the 1950 Souvenir Program that was also shared with us and is on exhibit. While the celebrated Oxford Day we know today was established in 1995, there actually was a previously celebrated "Oxford Day" on July 29th, 1950, in celebration of Oxford's 255 Anniversary. And further, we have learned of a few other celebrations of various designs in the 80's.

We hope you (and the ghosts of Robert Morris and a few Pirates) will stop by the Museum and enjoy the fun photos and memories on display in this window exhibit. Special thanks to the many Oxford Day leaders and volunteers who shared their photos and mementos with us to make this exhibit possible.

Saga of the Slippery Eel THE EEL IS BACK!

The Slippery Eel is a Smith Island crab skiff that was built at Bates Marina in Oxford by Dickie White. Funds were provided by a number of private citizens who became "plankholders." The Slippery Eel slipped out of Oxford and into the possession of the Smith Island Crab Skiff Association. That is until very recently when the Association wanted to see her come back to Oxford (mind you, restoration work was needed.)

The Association contacted Tom Campbell of Campbell's Boatyards who put them in touch with John Pepe (JP Assoc., Marine Surveyors and Oxford Commissioner), Sid Campen (resident and former Commissioner) and Tom Bixler (owner, Oxford Ferry.) The team journeyed to Crisfield in November to take a look at the Eel and to negotiate a deal for its return to Oxford.

After months of restoration work, the Eel is ready for action and will be on display in front of the Museum on April 24. (Continued on page 3)

(Saga of the Slippery Eel, continued)

The full story of the Slippery Eel, as told by Sid Campen, is posted on the Museum website. Should anyone wish to contribute to the project and become a member of the new Team Oxford, please contact John Pepe (410-726-3453); Tom Bixler (443-786-0923); or Sid Campen (443-786-1926). Any contribution would be greatly appreciated - and, while they last, you will receive a Slippery Eel t-shirt to show off your Oxford pride!

"Red" FIRST IN A SERIES ON REMARKABLE WOMEN OF OXFORD



Over the centuries Oxford has been—and still is—home to many accomplished women. Some of you may have known one of them: Jane Hanks (1916-2009), or “Red” as she was known to her fellow Flying Tigers.

Jane was a “come here,” moving to Oxford shortly after meeting her husband, Fletcher Hanks (a true Oxford original) in 1964. Although Jane had been a nurse in China, it was many years later that she met Fletcher, a former pilot who flew the dangerous route across the Himalayas during WWII known as “the Hump.” They had much in common as they discovered at a joint reunion of the AVG (American Volunteer Group) and the China National Aviation Corp.

Jane’s obituary published in the General Aviation News in 2009 recounts the achievements of this remarkable woman who lived to be 93:

“Emma Jane Foster was one of just two women who joined the 120-member AVG in 1941, at a time when the United States was (officially, at least) neutral in World War II. ‘I was an oddball in those days,’ she liked to say. She already knew China, for she had talked her way into a Penn State student exchange program through which she studied in Canton in 1935 and 1936. She had earned a Master’s

degree in Nursing at Yale by the time AVG recruiters sought her out.

She was known simply as “Red” to her fellow Flying Tigers, and preferred that name to the end of her long life. Foster married John Petach, a fighter pilot she met on the ship carrying both of them to Burma to join the AVG. Petach and his bride were among a small group who agreed to stay in China for two weeks after the AVG was disbanded in 1942, helping Gen. Chennault train Chinese pilots.

Petach was shot down by Japanese ground fire during that time and killed, leaving Jane a pregnant widow. She returned to the United States where her daughter, Joan Claire Petach, was born and became known to all of the Flying Tigers as ‘the one true Tiger Cub.’

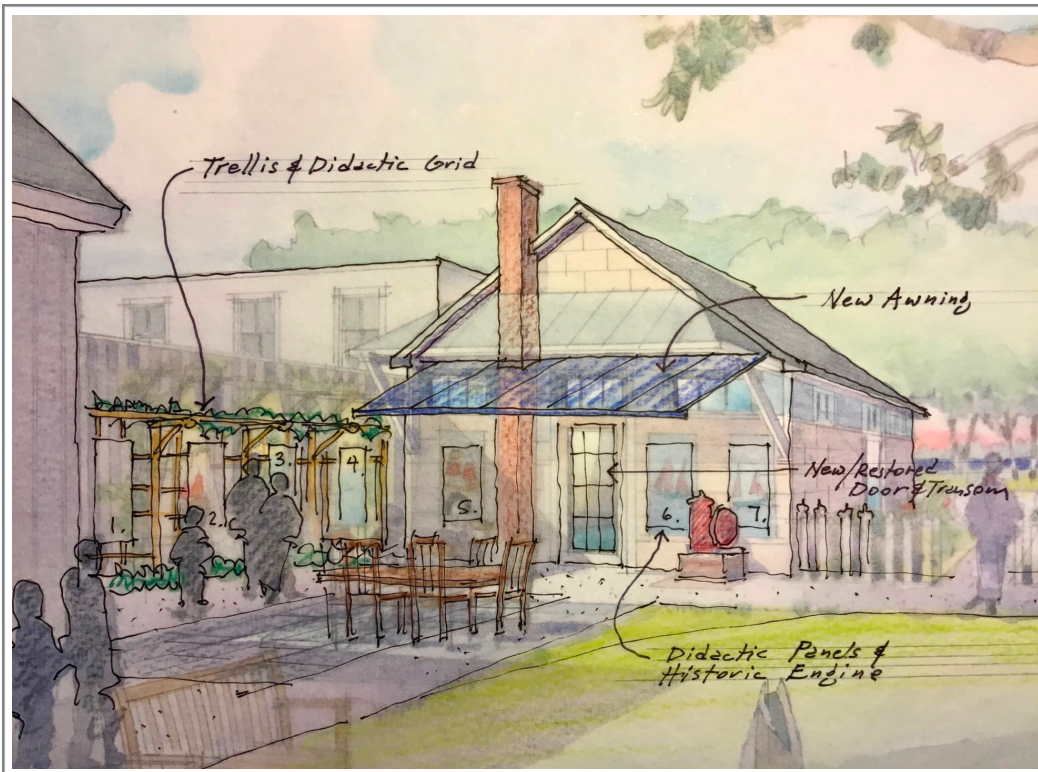
She taught Nursing at Yale for two years, and then continued her career as a Public Health educator and Administrator in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Romance wasn’t an issue, she told this writer. ‘Nobody, no man, for years could compare with the Flying Tigers,’ she said. However, Fletcher Hanks was another story. ‘I guess he filled the bill,’ she said. ‘We had the same interests.’ They married within months.

Jane moved to Maryland’s Eastern Shore, staying active in public health work. She was a nationally-ranked competitive cyclist, an avid tennis player and a strong swimmer well into her 80s, and a sharp-witted conversationalist to the end. She, along with all of the Flying Tigers, was awarded the Bronze Star by the U.S. Air Force in 1992, belatedly recognizing their heroism in the war against the Japanese.”



The Backyard Project REDEFINING OUR SPACE

The Oxford Museum, like every other organization, has had to re-imagine its activities to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Being closed to actual visitors for the past year has sent us, quite literally, back to the drawing board. As we considered possible futures, the Museum's Board of Trustees looked closely at the impact of our changing window exhibits and Scavenger Hunt program. The lesson was obvious. If we can't always be inside the Museum, then we need to extend the Museum outside!



The Museum's backyard, stretching down Market Street to Pork Alley, has been an underutilized asset for decades. But not any longer. This spring and summer, we will be transforming the space. We plan to add new landscaping, fencing, outdoor exhibits, gardens, seating, and activity areas. And we will reconnect the outside to the inside by reopening the Museum's long-hidden back doors. When completed, the Museum will have effectively doubled the amount of exhibit and program space available to our members and visitors. (Special thanks to Cameron Mactavish, Partner Emeritus, Voith & Mactavish Architects LLP, for representation of our plan.)

The budget for these projects is \$53,000. The Museum was able to get this project started by dipping into our reserve fund, but we need the community's support to make the plan a reality. A longtime Museum member has offered \$10,000 as a challenge grant to help us reach our goal. Won't you please do what you can to help us meet that challenge.

You can send us a check or you can make a secure donation online on the [Oxford Museum website Backyard Project page](#). And remember, if you are over 70.5 years of age and face required minimum distributions from your IRA, you can avoid income taxes by transferring funds directly from your IRA to the Oxford Museum. Thank you!