

The Museum's 60th Birthday Season!

2024 Scheduled Events

As details develop they can be found on the Events tab on the [Museum Website](#).

April 27

Oxford Day and Museum Opening

Don't miss the parade! Museum friends will be behind the Museum banner and the Museum will open at noon. We'll also have music in the backyard by Jenz Frenz.

May 11

Memories and Musings: Voices from the 60s

5 - 6:30 p.m. St. Paul's Church
followed by

Spring Soul, Dance the Night Away

The John Wesley Preservation Society
7 - 10 p.m. OCC

May 30

DEADLINE:

Hanks Award Nominations

([Nomination Form Here](#))

June 8

Memories and Musings: The MEWS

5 - 6:30 p.m. St. Paul's Church

June 22

Members' Party: Our 60th Birthday!

3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Museum Backyard
Doug Hanks, Jr. Award Presentation

July 13

Memories and Musings: TAYC

5 - 6:30 p.m. St. Paul's Church

August - November

The Cooperative Oxford Lab
A collaborative exhibit at the Museum
for the second half of the season.



From The President and Executive Director

We love Springtime in Oxford: the sound of chirping birds and the cries of the ospreys, the sight of beautiful daffodils, tulips, and cherry blossoms, the humming sound of mowers and the smell of mulch. And then there is Springtime at the Oxford Museum: the chatter of volunteers catching up and sipping coffee, the tapping sound of the printer cranking out copy, the smell of fresh paint on the walls and shelves, the weed pulling in the gardens, the water gurgling in the fountain, the hustle and bustle of objects moving into the Museum from storage . . . all as we prepare for the opening of the first exhibit of the 2024 season, **Oxford 1964 - The Times They Were A-Changin'** and the celebration of our 60th year in the Oxford Museum.

After what feels like a short hibernation, The Oxford Museum is ready to open the doors once again on April 27, Oxford Day. You may have noticed the windows transitioned into the 60s in February: one window featuring some of our favorite record album covers from the 1960s and not long after that a huge three-layer, revolving birthday cake arrived to celebrate the museum's 60th birthday. What more perfect decoration for the cake; pictures of our townspeople from the 1960s! Over 45 people photos, some in military uniforms, some in diapers; some in wedding gowns, some on motorcycles. But who are they? The big reveal will happen on Oxford Day. Watch for it in our window and join us on our opening day.

The Oxford Museum was organized in 1964 with a total of 17 museum members and a budget of \$300. Dues were \$2 per person. The first museum space was opened on the second floor of the current Town Hall building after the Oxford Volunteer Fire Company moved to its new quarters on the Oxford Road. Yes, the Town Hall building was a fire station in the 60s!

Mrs. Betty Moll was the Museum's first curator and she collected many of the items you will see in this exhibit beginning with bits of pottery discovered by digging a trench on what is now the Oxford Social property. It had been the property of the Eastford Hotel and then the Maryland Military and Naval Academy.



Founders Mrs. John Lillard, president, and Mrs. John B Moll, curator

Curated by Stuart Parnes, this exhibit will feature some of the original donations to our Museum. (Read more about the exhibit team's research process on page 3, by Karina Paape.) Come and see what our town was like in the 60s and celebrate our 60th season in Oxford.

Liz Koprowski Julie Wells
President Executive Director

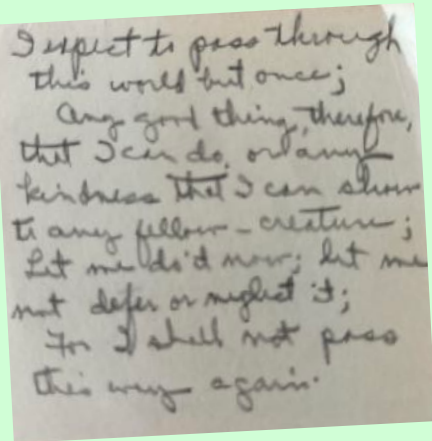
Oxford Vignettes

Finding an ancestor's diary or journal can be an extraordinary gift to a family, a collector, or an entire community, especially when it comes to understanding the everyday ongoing in a small community like Oxford. This has been the case of the Valliant/Newnam/Benson family in the sharing of Sara Benson's diary through her great niece, Cathy Schmidt and Attractions Magazine.

Recently we asked Cathy if she could look into Sara's Benson's journal in 1964, when the Museum was founded, and sure enough her most recent [Oxford Vignettes](#) submitted to [Attraction Magazine](#) shares a cold, wet and windy April evening when Bill Benson was off to a Museum Committee Meeting:

Tuesday, April 21, 1964

Such weather! Cold, rainy, drizzle all day and night. Al McNeal worked the gasoline lines today and Len Fluharty helped Bill run the water line to go out at the end of the dock. Late afternoon the material for the gangplank arrived from Baltimore! Tonight Bill went to the meeting of the Oxford Museum Committee in the town office. Dues for membership will be \$2 per person.



*I expect to pass through
this world but once;
Any good thing, therefore,
that I can do, or any
kindness that I can show
to any fellow-creature;
let me do it now; let me
not defer or neglect it;
For I shall not pass
this way again.*

Cathy also recently shared this hand written note that Sara Benson kept on her refrigerator:

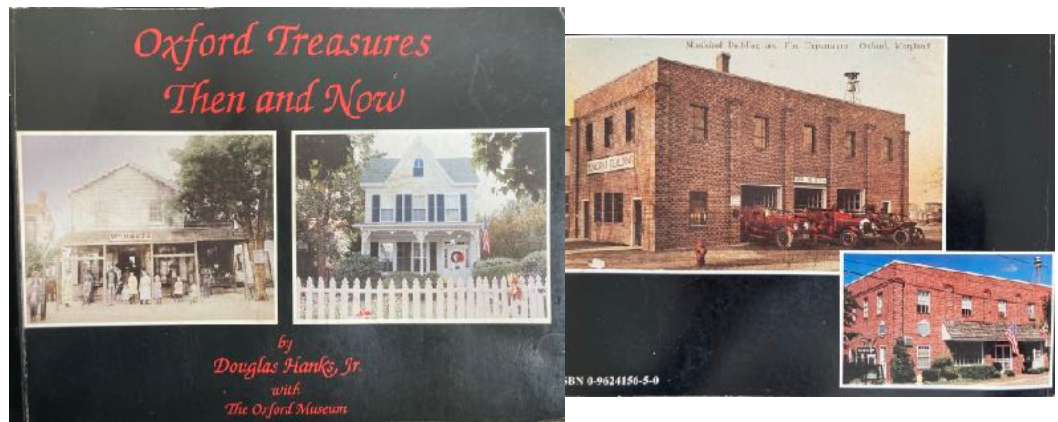
"I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show, to any fellow-creature, let me do it now, let me not defer or neglect it. For I shall not pass this way again."

The 2023 DOUGLAS HANKS, JR. PRESERVATION AWARD:

A Call for Nominations

The Douglas Hanks, Jr. Preservation Award was initiated in 2006 to recognize extraordinary efforts by individuals, organizations and others in preserving the unique history and heritage of Oxford and the surrounding area. Since then over 30 individuals and organizations have been recognized for their individual and collective achievements.

The recipients of the 2023 award will be announced on June 22 at the members summer party and the Museum's 60th birthday party! In addition to a certificate, recipients also receive a copy of Doug Hanks book, *Oxford Treasures Then and Now*, published in 1999. A collection of



comparative photographs of Oxford, this publication was a partnership between the museum and Doug, and after his passing in 2003, spearheaded the creation of the award both to encourage and recognize preservation efforts and to honor Doug whose ancestral roots go back to Oxford's beginning as a town.

Nominations for the award may be submitted during the month of May. Any nomination received after May 30 will be held over and considered next year. Award categories are:

- Restoration Projects and Renovation Projects: Restoration of an historic structure or landscape to its original form or detail. Renovation of an historic structure to contemporary standards while retaining its distinct original historical character and respecting the neighborhood scale. (project completion in 2023)
- Outstanding Service in Preservation: Development of a presentation, publication, educational program, oral history, or exhibit regarding an aspect of life in Oxford, an historic building, or items indigenous to the area for the public. (Must have been completed in 2023)
- Stewardship: Preservation of land, shoreline, or water quality in Oxford or the surrounding area. Restoration of habitat. Prevention of inappropriate use of an historic property. Long term care and protection of historic property.
- Lifetime Contribution: Recognition of an extraordinary contribution which may encompass some or all of the qualifying categories listed above over an extended period of time.
- Nominees may be an individual, group, organization, business or civic institution. Nominees need not be residents of Oxford as long as the activity specifically relates to Oxford and the surrounding area.

The [2023 nomination form is linked here](#). In addition to a narrative description of the qualifying event, activity or edifice, accompanying photographs and letters of support are recommended.

RESEARCH CORNER

By Karina Paape

The museum's newest exhibit, *Oxford 1964: The Times They Were A-Changin'*, celebrates the museum's 60th anniversary. The Museum's doors opened for the first time on April 3, 1964, and was housed in what had been the Oxford Fire Department before it re-located to its current location just outside of town. The building is now occupied by our Town offices.

Research starts with a question, which for this exhibit was: "What was Oxford like in 1964?" The first step to answering that question was to consult primary source materials like newspapers, photographs, church records, meeting minutes, old telephone directories, oral histories, local historical societies, the Talbot County Free Library's Maryland Room, and our own Oxford Museum archives. This may sound comprehensive enough to find all that one would need. But not so: many records have been lost or destroyed, or not kept at all. Then the challenge becomes "how to fill in the blanks."

The task of scouring sources is a tedious one. Looking at microfilm of the *Star Democrat*, searching bound volumes of the *Tidewater Times* and vertical files of news clippings and business ads, locating photos from the era and reading disturbing news articles about the riots that besieged Cambridge in 1963, 1964, and 1967. Coverage of the racial divide was found in the Cambridge weekly *The Daily Banner* and a set of binders containing Civil Rights articles, both of which are housed at the Dorchester Historical Society.

One of our objectives was to determine whether there had been any racial discord in Oxford during the Civil Rights years. Nothing was found that even mentioned Oxford and civil rights in the same sentence. The only mention was during a commissioners' meeting on July 3, 1963, when local residents Thomas Jones, William Bergman, Victor Belle, Mrs. Grace Delahay and Mrs. Valliant "met with the Board to discuss integration since the owners of the three public dining facilities assured the Board they would not refuse service because of colors, there seemed to be no need to set up a biracial committee."

Even trips to local consignment/thrift shops and searching eBay are considered primary

source research. We found a pair of 1960s roller skates and old copies of *TV Guide Magazine* at antique malls and thrift shops and an important 1964 *Life Magazine* on eBay.

Secondary source research is probably the most fun and enjoyable to conduct because one can do it from their home computer at any hour of the day or night thanks to the internet and Wikipedia, Google, and You Tube, the most popular sites for secondary research. These can lead to lots of rabbit holes that can consume whole days, giving one the chance to relive their best years and 'the good ole days.'

Local residents also proved to be a good source of exhibit materials. We found a 1960s RCA Victorola color television; a Barbie house replete with Barbie, pencil skirts, shoes, purses, bathing suits, and swirling dresses; and games such as Tinker Toys and Building Blocks (predecessor of Legos).

Sampling of research discoveries

- At an Oxford commissioners meeting held on March 20, 1963, "The Board reaffirmed their policy of last year that there be no ball playing in the Park." It was also suggested "that a small sign be placed in the park that no alcoholic beverages as well as no ball playing were allowed."
- On May 15, 1963, the Oxford commissioners met to discuss the "Port Welcome" - a tourist ship out of Baltimore that made trips around the Bay. On May 18-19 the Port Welcome was scheduled to visit Oxford, carrying 400 passengers each day. Organizers believed the proceeds from the "pilgrimage" might yield \$1,000. A committee led by a Mrs. Heineman "asked permission to state that this money be set aside for the Maritime Museum to be housed in the now fire company headquarters."
- The June 12, 1963 Commissioners meeting focused on a "rat problem" in Oxford. "Mr. Abbott reported that the park area had recently had a severe rat problem...On a motion duly made and seconded...the County Public Health Department was authorized to take any action it deemed necessary on Town property to eradicate the rats."
- On January 9, 1964, the Oxford Commissioners meeting included a letter from the town's lawyer, John Wright, which

was read: "...defining hucksters, peddlers, hawkers...Local farmers and crabbers will be excepted."

- In 1964 Easton hosted its annual Delmarva Chicken Festival: "Eat Delmarvalous Chicken Often." The Festival included a National Chicken Cooking Contest.
- The Oxford Boatyard Co. started advertising the "Oxford 27" they designed and built. It had a beam of 8' 6", a draft of 4' 6", and a 5' cockpit well.
- In Cambridge on July 17, 1963, the Cambridge Yacht Club announced cancellation of two regattas: the club's 53rd Annual Sail Regatta and its Power Regatta. The club's Board of Governors cited the reason to be "the city's continuing Racial crisis."

Oxford real estate in 1964:

- For \$35,000 one could purchase a six room house with dock and overlooking Town Creek. "Demand for Oxford waterfronts far exceeds the supply, so don't delay inspection of this little gem." Offered by realtor Douglas Hanks.
- Another Hanks offering for \$35,000 was a "Lovely secluded small three-bedroom, two-bath house on Town Creek" which included a bulkhead and dock" and was "Ideal for a retiring couple."
- Two acre lots were available in Holly Harbor "a new restricted waterfront community...on lovely Island Creek...known for its boating, fine fishing, crabbing and waterfowl hunting." Holly Harbor was located just outside of Oxford, off of Evergreen Rd. Lot prices unknown.
- The 28-room, 12,000 sq. ft. Robert Morris Inn also went on the market in 1964. The buyer's goal was to remodel the Inn to "be a copy of the taverns in Williamsburg, Virginia." Price unknown.
- The Oxford Boatyard was also sold in 1964. "Extensive improvements are now underway, and a ships store, a new parking lot, and additional slips are planned for next Spring."

Please stop by the Museum and see what Oxford was like in the 60s.

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CALL FOR DOCENTS

The Oxford Museum runs on volunteers. We hope you will consider becoming a docent this season. If you are a new member or new to the village, this is a great way to learn about historic Oxford, meet many people, and serve our community. If you have been here forever but now finally have some free time, join us! Email theoxfordmuseum@gmail.com for more details.

THANK YOU

The Oxford Museum opens every Spring because of the generosity of so many of our donors and members. Our exhibits, programs and events, interns, and operational costs are covered by your membership fees, contributions to our annual fund and matching fund gifts. We appreciate your annual membership renewal and your thoughtful annual fund gifts. Thank you!

The Oxford Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your generous contributions are 100% tax deductible for income tax purposes.

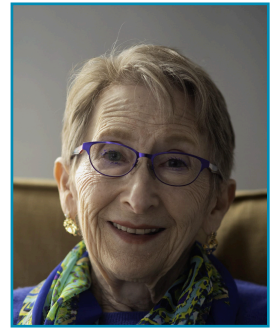
And if your company has a matching gift program, please sign us up!

Memories and Musings: What A Great Idea!

You never know what might come out of a robust committee meeting. "Remember When?" said one member and another added, "Memories and Musings." And now here we are, season three of 'Remember When: Memories and Musings', and now with a shortened title, just 'Memories and Musings.'

Our braintrust, and chair of the Program and Events Committee of the Board, is the mighty Paula Bell. She puts her heart and soul into providing great programming for our Museum and its members, learning from the longer term residents, to find topics of interest and people willing or yearning to share their experience in Oxford.

Over the past two years we have hosted 8 programs. Jenny Stanley shares her space at St. Paul's Church on South Morris Street and the venue suits the Museum splendidly. Some of our programs have been companions to a current exhibit, others just help tell the story of Oxford. A few were so oversubscribed that we moved to our other partner's space, the Oxford Community Center. Many of these programs have been recorded, giving us wonderful oral histories, that can be seen anytime on our website.



Thank you Paula, and we look forward to this summer's line-up! (See the 2024 Schedule of Events on Page 1 or the EVENTS page on the Museum Website for more details.)

2023

Growing Up in Oxford: Suzanne Litty, Elaine Cox, Lil Lord, Nancy Thompson, Bob Valiant and Tot O'Mara
The Library: Jean Nollmeyer, Pam Baker, Barbara Hartshorn, Dorothy Fenwick and Pam Harrison
St. Paul's Church Restoration: Jenny Stanley and Joe Balderson

2022

The Mural on the Oxford Market wall - Howard Lapp, Tot O'Mara and Dorothy Fenwick
The Oxford Fire Department - Tim Kearns, Steve Mroczek, Graham Norbury and Pam Baker
The Capers Crew: Ray Stevens, Tom Bixler, Sid Campen and John Pepe
Down on the Farm: Tot O'Mara
Kickin' the Can: Al Smith and Leo Nollmeyer

Behind the Scenes: Getting Ready to Open

Rainy March Days are perfect for painting, fixing, organizing and doing all sorts of volunteer work at the Museum.

Below, Susan Eubank and Larry Bowers joined Julie and Brian Wells for shelf painting while John Tochko tried to retrofit our 1960s era TV Cabinet with a Smart TV screen. It worked!

There is always something to do at the Museum—let us know if you have talents to offer the Museum Volunteers Corps!

