

Bringing History Home

The Campaign for OAHA



OXFORD
AREA HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION



WHO WE ARE

The Oxford Area Historical Association (OAHA) was founded in the year 2000 by Dr. Faye Doyle, inspired by a conversation with Jahan Sheikholeslami. We are passionately dedicated to preserving the historic significance of the borough of Oxford and the five surrounding townships. Our geographical focus is the entire area covered by the Oxford Area School District.

OAHA presents monthly programs on a variety of historical topics, records oral histories of long-time area residents, organizes walking tours, sponsors re-enactor programs in the school district, and arranges trips to historical sites. We preserve objects and documents of local historical interest, and assist area residents with their own research.

The Oxford Area Historical Association serves as a repository of local stories.

We are the story-keepers.

We do this by making local history relevant, interesting, and fun. We do it because humans have always shared stories - on cave walls, with song and dance, on quilts, and around campfires, dinner tables, and porches. The stories our elders told were filled with meaning. By listening to them, we learned what it meant to be a part of the land, part of our families, and part of our communities.



OAHA founder Faye Doyle (right) speaks with visitors at the Locust Street location.

Oxford has always been a crossroads where people met and exchanged goods and stories. A place where diverse interests sparked new ideas and energy, and where a community gathered and took root.

Join us in exploring and satisfying your curiosity about the Oxford area's fascinating history. Bring us your stories about setting down roots and making your mark in the Oxford area. OAHA shares the area's rich history and compelling stories with our friends, neighbors, and visitors.

THE CHALLENGE

Ten years ago, an Archives Committee was created to acquire, process and house documents and objects related to the history of the Oxford area. Originally, we rented space from East Nottingham Township to house our collection and to allow our volunteer archivists space to process items.

By 2017 we had outgrown the Township building, and we rented space on Locust Street in downtown Oxford. As our collection grew, we expanded into two climate-controlled storage units in order to safely house the wealth of archives and historical objects we steward. At our Locust Street location we were limited, because of our size restrictions, in the materials we could accept from residents who wished to preserve area history, and had been looking at expansion options for a few years.

In addition, the owner of the mixed use building we were renting expressed a desire to sell, and OAHA was placed on a month-to-month lease.

OAHA knew we needed to start looking for a new location to house our growing collection. During the COVID-19 crisis, the space limitations became even more of a concern.



Longtime volunteer Vernon Ringler working at a desk located in a hallway in the Locust Street location. The rooms were small and narrow and it was difficult for more than a few people to work at the same time.

Once the pandemic hit, because our location was too small to put social-distancing measures in place, we lost many long-time volunteers. In addition, because we could not hold in-person programs or events, our essential fundraising efforts were negatively impacted. We knew that we needed to increase both space and numbers of volunteers in order to keep going, and started looking for a solution.

THE SOLUTION

OAHA has been a vital part of the Oxford community for over 20 years now, and we are continually pursuing new ways to preserve and share local history.

In March of 2023, we signed an agreement of sale for the former Union School Building at 119 S. 5th Street in Oxford, along with a very affordable five-year lease which will allow us time to raise money to purchase the building. During those five years, the building owner is responsible for all maintenance, excluding grass cutting and snow removal. The owner also generously donated all of the existing furniture in the building for OAHA's use.

Recently renovated to include an accessible entrance ramp, handicapped bathrooms, a full-building HVAC system and a large generator, the building requires very few alterations to make it an ideal location for OAHA's History Center.

This location has sufficient space for volunteers to work, local residents and students to do research, and school children and other visitors to tour. The majority of schools in the OASD are within a 5-10 minute walk, so the location will be ideal for working on joint projects with local students.

We will be collaborating with Lincoln University to start a History Major intern program, now that we have the space to make that possible.



Students stand in front of the Union School at 5th and Hodgson Streets in Oxford, circa 1895.

The new History Center contains approximately 6,000 square feet of usable space (compared with our former Archives building, which had less than 1,000 square feet) and includes a side yard and a 40-car parking lot. There is ample space for both indoor and outdoor activities and events, and room to grow in the future.

The building also affords the possibility of sharing second floor space with municipal historical commissions or renting to third parties. It is our goal to provide space for the local historical commissions, many of which are struggling to find volunteers. One central location for archives, with consistent staffing, would help to ensure protection of the information previously obtained by numerous volunteers throughout the region.

In the future, it will also be possible to fit out the basement, expanding the usable space in the building to over 10,000 square feet.

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COMMUNITY IMPACT

This new location could become an important County destination and bring in much-needed tourism dollars to our town and region. As Chester County moves forward with a commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the start of our country, we hope that OAHA can serve as an information hub for Southern Chester County, sending people to various sites of historical interest in our area.

One of the things that the pandemic made clear is that people need the support of their local community in order to survive. In the often-polarizing society that America has become, it is more important than ever to truly know and understand your neighbor. But how can a historical association be a part of that?

Honoring the Past

Celebrating the Present

Shaping the Future

According to the American Historical Association, “people who have weathered adversity not just in some work of fiction, but in real, historical circumstances can provide inspiration.” By bringing to life the stories of ordinary citizens of Oxford and the surrounding townships, OAHA helps to illustrate that local people in the past - people just like us - have successfully survived prior pandemics and worked through societal moral dilemmas. These relatable stories of ordinary people can provide lessons in courage, diligence, and the value of a strong community.



1873 Town Map of Oxford PA

The work that is being done by the Oxford Area Historical Association to illustrate these stories of the past is an essential part of giving community members hope for the future.

Together we can foster a vibrant and supportive community with a strong sense of place. History is being made everyday by ordinary, extraordinary people right here.

*Join us on this journey.
Let's share our stories.*

CAMPAIGN BUDGET

The community investment needed to make this project a reality is \$1,200,000. The numbers are broken out in the budget below. As a part of our agreement of sale, OAHA is required to put down \$50,000 each year towards the purchase price of the building, in addition to our initial deposit of \$50,000. Our monthly rent, which is capped at \$1,000 per month for the entire five-year period, does not go towards the purchase.

Building Purchase	\$700,000*
Closing Costs	\$30,000
Elevator & shaft	\$200,000
Signage	\$10,000
Museum Cases and Archival Framing	\$40,000
Donor Recognition/Courtyard	\$40,000
Landscaping	\$30,000
Parking lot - Repaving	\$30,000
PR, Event, & Campaign Materials	\$20,000
Contingency	<u>\$100,000</u>
Total	\$1,200,000

**The final cost of the building itself is \$700,000 or the fair market value, whichever is less at the time of closing.*

NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

All gifts over \$1,000 will be recognized on a donor wall to be placed in a prominent area of the main floor of the building. For smaller gifts, a brick campaign will be conducted closer to 2027, with members of the public being able to purchase engraved pavers for an outdoor courtyard.

In addition, naming opportunities for various rooms and other areas are available, with a smaller plaque to be prominently displayed in the corresponding area of the building.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP

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Dr. Faye Doyle

Campaign Co-Chairs

April Herr

Philip Sapp

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For more information, please visit our website at www.oxfordhistorical.org, or send us an email at information@oxfordhistorical.org.

The official registration and financial information for the Oxford Area Historical Association may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. The Oxford Area Historical Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, contributions to which are tax-deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law. EIN # 23-3045756



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