



Historical Society  
of Old Yarmouth

THE BEACHCOMBER

*Our seasonal newsletter for members and friends of the . . .*

Autumn 2022

# Historical Society of Old Yarmouth

## THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S ANNUAL DINNER RETURNS ON OCTOBER 18



It's been three years, but our popular Annual Dinner returns on October 18 at the Old Yarmouth Inn. Invitations have been sent out and reservations are coming in. If you haven't already, make yours soon since there is room for only 100 at the Inn. Dinner reservations and meal choices must be made by September 25. The Social Hour begins at 5:00 with the program getting underway at 5:30 and dinner at 6:30. Cost is \$65. per person. Call the office for further information, or go to our web site, [info@hsoy.org](mailto:info@hsoy.org).

The dinner meeting will feature a talk by our administrator, Marie Kesten Zahn. Marie's topic is *TAXES, TRADE, AND TREASURE: The Culture of Tea in Colonial America*. The subject is relevant as we approach the date of December 16, 2023, the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party when 342 chests of tea imported by the British East India Tea Company were thrown into Boston Harbor as a political protest for "taxation without representation."

Awards will be made to the following people who have made significant contributions to the organization in the past three years:

**Anne Grammer** who for over twenty years has applied her skill and knowledge to curating our costume collection, making it one of the best and largest on Cape Cod. Additionally she has given talks on subjects ranging from the history of quilts to bridal wear and put on multiple successful exhibits.

**Laurel Gabel and Melanie Barron** have built a cohesive unit of twenty volunteers for the Ancient Cemetery R.I.P. Project. They have meticulously cleaned over 1,000 of some of the oldest gravestones in Yarmouth, recorded the data from each stone, and linked the genealogy of those buried there, work not done anywhere else on Cape Cod. This past year the Friends of Ancient Cemetery became a 501C3 nonprofit organization and will take the program to new heights.

**Glen Nelson** has been for several years the HSOY go to guy when trees or branches fell across the HSOY trails. Glen and his chainsaw often made it to the tree before it was even reported to the office or web site. Last year he cut up and removed over twenty. His ongoing volunteer support of the trails is deeply appreciated.

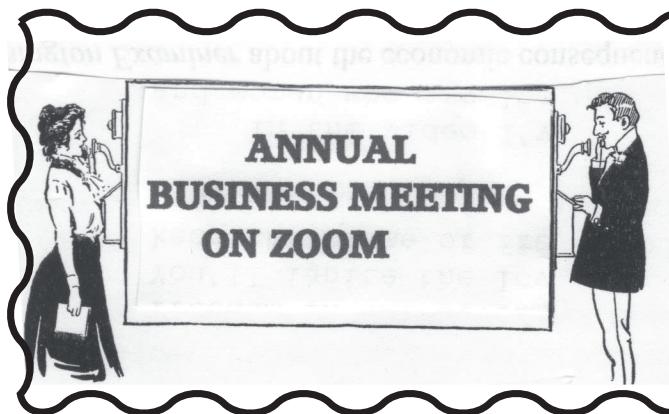


## OUR ANNUAL DINNER SPEAKER MARIE KESTEN ZAHN

Marie is the HSOY Administrator and also the director of the Harwich Historical Society, and she has worked on a mapping and archival project for Woodside Cemetery in Yarmouth Port. Previously she spent three years working at the Whydah Pirate Museum in West Yarmouth as an archaeologist, conservator, and science education coordinator. She volunteers as a Solar System Ambassador for NASA, acting as a liaison between the space agency and the public, spreading awareness of current and upcoming NASA missions and sharing news about ongoing work in the space sciences. Marie's work in science and archaeology has given her a unique perspective and appreciation for history.

She is a "40 Under 40" Honoree. The Cape & Plymouth Business Media "40 under 40" Awards spotlight the region's top young business leaders who excel in their industry, have exemplary leadership qualities and demonstrate a commitment to the community. Marie was selected for this award from over 140 nominations for her work in Yarmouth and Harwich as well as her many volunteer commitments as a NASA Solar System Ambassador and with the Massachusetts Archaeological Society.

Sadly, Marie will be leaving us in a few months to join her husband in Ohio where he has taken a job with Google. She is capable, efficient, computer and internet savvy, always helpful and cheerful and has served us well for the past two years. We will miss her, but wish her and her husband well in their new life.



As space at the Annual Dinner is limited, the Annual Business Meeting is being held separately on Zoom on **Thursday, November 17 at 7:00 PM**. This gives all our members an opportunity to participate. It will include remarks from the president, brief reports from the treasurer and committee chairpersons and present the slate of officers for 2023. Reservations are required and can be made at [info@hsoy.org](mailto:info@hsoy.org) .

## NEWPORT ADVENTURE

Although space is limited there are still openings for the Newport Adventure on Wednesday, September 21. We will carpool to Newport for a 10AM guided tour of Belmont House. This 56,000 square foot, one bedroom mansion, was built in 1894 for millionaire bachelor, Oliver Belmont. He caused a sensation a few years later when his neighbor, Alva Vanderbilt, divorced her husband and moved across the street. The house had several very interesting owners before it was purchased by millionaire jewelry maker, Carolyn Rafaelian who restored the house to all its nineteenth century grandeur.

After lunch on our own, we will enjoy a tour of Rough Point, home of millionaire tobacco heiress, Doris Duke. When her father died, she was considered the richest girl in the world. This mansion, located at the end of Bellevue Avenue, was originally built by the Vanderbilts. Additions were made when Doris's father bought the house. Doris later made more changes to house her priceless collection of antiques, which she started assembling on her round-the-world honeymoon. Somewhat eccentric, she once kept a camel in her backyard.

The two houses are quite different. Both owners were larger than life characters. Belmont House is a great example of the 1890's style; and Rough Point exudes Doris Duke's twentieth century style.

To join us sign up on our website or call the office - (508) 362-3021. The cost is \$49 per person.



## WINTER SALONS AT THE BANGS HALLET HOUSE

On Sunday, November 6 at 2PM Naturalist Robert Finch will present a lecture *ON THE BEACH: THREE CLASSIC WORKS OF CAPE COD LITERATURE*, a discussion of Henry David Thoreau's *Cape Cod* (1864), Henry Beston's *The Outermost House* (1928), and Wyman Richardson's *The House on Nauset Marsh* (1955). Hybrid live audience/Zoom audience. FREE.

On Sunday, December 11 at 2PM Amy Whorf McGuigan will speak on the *History of New England Christmas Traditions*. Hybrid live audience/Zoom audience. FREE.

*Space is very limited and reservations are required for both, go to our website at [hsoy.org/events](http://hsoy.org/events).*

### CHRISTMAS STORIES HOUSE TOURS AT THE BANGS HALLET HOUSE

Thursday, December 8, 1-4PM, Friday, December 9, 5-7PM, Saturday, December 10, 1-4PM, \$15. This series is in the planning stages; at a later date check our website at [hsoy.org/events](http://hsoy.org/events) for details.

### OTHER UPCOMING FALL & WINTER PROGRAMS

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 10AM** - A Walk Around Yarmouth's Indian Reservation. Historian Bob Kelley and Nipmuc-Wampanog Marcus Hendricks lead a walk around the boundaries of former reservation land. \$10 members, \$15 non-members.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 10AM** and **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 10AM** - Walks Around Yarmouth's Indian Reservation. See October s2 above for details.

*Reservations are required for all of the above, see our website at [hsoy.org/events](http://hsoy.org/events)*

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 4-7PM** – Yarmouth Port Green “Safe Halloween Trick or Treat”. Visit Bangs Hallet House, Kelley Chapel, Wetu, Edward Gorey Museum, Thacher Hall, Winslow Crocker House and Chapter House Inn for treats and scary Halloween fun in a safe environment. All ages welcome!

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 3PM** – Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service in historic Kelley Chapel behind the Yarmouth Post Office, Rte 6A. Sit on 1790 Quaker Meeting House pews in front of a potbellied stove and enjoy traditional hymns and an inspirational message. FREE

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1-4PM** – Yarmouth Port Christmas Stroll. Visit the museums, B&Bs, inns and businesses along Old Kings Highway as they welcome you with holiday decorations, tasty treats and music of the season. Children invited to have their photos taken with Santa at the Captain Bangs Hallet House.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 5-7 PM** - New Members' and Volunteers' Reception at the Captain Bangs Hallet House.

### MID-WINTER LECTURE SERIES AT THE CAPE COD CULTURAL CENTER IN SOUTH YARMOUTH

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2023, 2PM** - Historian Vin Miles, *Transatlantic Train*.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2023, 2PM** – Center – Historian Greg Williams, *Mad Jack Percival*.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2023, 2PM** – Historical Figure Reenactor Judy Kaloara, *Deborah Samson*.

*Reservations are required for all lectures. Go to our website [hsoy.org/events](http://hsoy.org/events) or email [info@hsoy.org](mailto:info@hsoy.org).*



## LIZZIE TAYLOR RYDER SHOW

We had a terrific turnout for our costume exhibit *Styles & Stories* at the Bangs Hallet House in June. For those who were unable to attend, the exhibit was photographed and a slide show with narration can be found online at <https://bit.ly/StylesStories>. One of Lizzie Ryder Taylor's diaries may still be viewed until October in the rear exhibit room at Bangs Hallet House along with a selection of beautiful Victorian baby and children's wear. Additionally several costumed figures remain in the front bedroom of the house. They are from various eras and include a full skirted 1870s silk gown, an Edwardian lace tea gown and a purple silk dress with velvet trim dating to about 1905. They are well worth a look.



## NEW TECHNOLOGY COMES TO THE BANGS HALLET HOUSE

Now that Wifi has been added to the museum, our newly formed Technology Committee has arranged, after careful consideration, to install a small video screen in the first floor exhibit room. It will be showing video and slide shows to supplement the exhibits there, and will make use of our large photo collection.

We hope you enjoy this new feature. HSOY created slide shows and brief videos are also available online.

## AUTHORS WANTED

Are you interested in writing about historical subjects? HSOY welcomes articles that have some connection to local history. We can use them in the Beechcomber or in our monthly Constant Contact emails to members, which replaces the monthly *Registering History* page, which used to run in the sadly now defunct Yarmouth Register. If you have any ideas or subjects you would like to explore or share, email our Publications Committee Chair,

Duncan Oliver at [oliver02675@comcast.net](mailto:oliver02675@comcast.net).

## MEMBERS' LIBRARY

Our Members' Library has added several new titles this year which are available, along with the rest of our lending library, for members to borrow; it's one of the benefits of membership. Our newest books are:

*Barons of the Sea: and their race to build the world's fastest clipper ship* by Steven Ujifusa

*Sea Captains of Cape Cod: each town's contribution to maritime history* by Michael Pregot

*Wampanoag Art for the Ages, Traditional and Transitional* by Lee Roscoe

To borrow a title give our office a call and make arrangements to pick it up; you may also browse there.

Books in our library and archives can be searched here: <https://www.libib.com/u/hsoy>.

Only circulating library materials are available to borrow.



## SUMMER WETU PROGRAM



Summer 2022 saw the launch of a new series of family programs based at the wetu. The hands-on discovery programs were designed for children and their parents to show what life on Cape Cod was like before the Pilgrims arrived. Organized by Bob Kelley, Aleina Laughton and Mary Woodward, and staffed by additional HSOY volunteers, families had a chance to learn from the Nipmuc-Wampanoag Community as they shared their traditions and stories about their culture. We learned about wampum and made bracelets and necklaces. We took guided walks on the nature trails to explore the connections between all living things and learn how the native families hunted and fished and provided for their families.

Plans for 2023 include expanding the age range for children to Grades 1 through 6, working closely with schools, scout groups and home school families as well as adding a hands-on musical component to the experience.



*Marcus Hendricks with children*



## REVOLUTIONARY WAR RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Just to keep you up to date, Yarmouth and Dennis have a committee that is looking into getting the facts right about Cape Cod's part in the Revolution. HSOY's website at [hsoy.org/revolution](http://hsoy.org/revolution) will get you to their printed research thus far.

The first event of this 250th anniversary is in 2023. The Boston Tea Party had two people from old Yarmouth as participants. We knew of Captain Joseph Bassett; the new person was recognized by the Boston Tea Party Museum in early August - Captain Edmund Sears of Quivet Neck. One of the tea ships wrecked off of Truro on the way to Boston. The research into closing the courthouse in 1774 will be done primarily by Barnstable and Sandwich, but yes, Yarmouth men were involved. Did women participate as well? Think Mercy Otis Warren. Although she moved to Plymouth, there must have been others who had similar political opinions and weren't shy about expressing them.

We all know that the Lexington alarm on April 18, 1775 brought militia out from all over Massachusetts. It now appears that there was another alarm the next day in Marshfield where 100 British soldiers were stationed. Yarmouth men marched to Marshfield; were they part of the force that made these soldiers sail back to Boston before a clash occurred with the overwhelming force of local militia? Most likely, but more research is needed and is being done.

From this point until the British left Boston in March 1776, there were several other supposed military incidents on Cape Cod. These included the capture of a large sloop at Butler's Hole (near the Monomoy shoals). Rebels (Yarmouth fishermen?) supposedly took the flour which was on the way to the British in Boston. The flour was brought up Bass River and eventually ended up with the colonial forces under George Washington surrounding Boston. Three others include armed attempts by the British at Nobscusset, Great Island in Yarmouth, and Common Fields in Barnstable, but dates and details are sketchy. There is no proof regarding any of these events and researchers are looking for primary source proof or at least more detailed oral history accounts.

Yes, we did have a militia company there when Dorchester Heights was fortified in March, 1776. HSOY owns one of the letters that militia Captain Joshua Gray wrote to his wife while he was stationed there. Elsewhere, there are muster and payrolls showing the Falmouth alarm in 1778 had Yarmouth militia units present there. Yarmouth had its militia guard the 480 British prisoners from the wreck of the HMS Somerset when they marched through Yarmouth and spent the night here in November 1778. Significant numbers of Yarmouth militiamen also saw duty in Rhode Island reinforcing Continental Army units.

Although considerable research has already occurred about the service of Yarmouth men in the Continental Army, more remains to be accomplished. Yarmouth veterans were present at many key battles during the War including Trenton, Saratoga, Monmouth, Stony Point, Penobscot Bay and Yorktown. Among the sixteen known deaths in the line of duty, twelve occurred during the arduous winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge. More research is beginning to identify the names and exploits of those who served on privateers and in our fledgling navy. Significant work has already occurred regarding soldier burials in Yarmouth and Dennis cemeteries.

There were about 2600 people living in Yarmouth (including East Precinct now Dennis) in the 1770s. Nearly 300 men from this small population served in the military, a number that the committee believes will grow larger as our research continues.

The committee is looking for more primary source material about Yarmouth & Dennis during this period and is making a direct appeal to HSOY's and DHS's memberships to share details about family members who were military veterans or supported the war effort on the home front. Our research team would welcome information from family lore, diaries or letters. "Fire-side tales" — even if they are embellished — could contain clues that contribute direction to ongoing research. Perhaps someone even has memorabilia from a descendent such as a musket, sword or clothing that could be loaned to HSOY or simply photographed to become part of our town's historical record.

Members of the committee : Maureen Rukstalis – chair, Bob Poskitt, Jane Cain, Jack Duggan, Mary Vilbon, Jenn Werner, Dorothy Robinson, Diane Rochelle, David Schaefer, and Duncan Oliver.

**2022 Annual Appeal**

We offer our sincere thanks and gratitude, especially during a financially difficult year, for the many members who generously donated to our 2022 Annual Appeal. We raised nearly \$8,000 this year! All contributions help HSOY to continue our mission to preserve, promote and present the history of Yarmouth. Thank you!

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Historical Society of Old Yarmouth  
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**Historical Society of Old Yarmouth  
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