

RYE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND TOWN MUSEUM

Beginning the first week of May, the Rye Town Museum will be open to visitors on Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. And we are always open by appointment.

Make your appointment online, email us at info@ryenhistoricalociety.org, or call 603-436-9278

Schedule Museum Visit

THE RYE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS AN INDEPENDENT, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO COLLECTING AND PRESERVING THE RICH HISTORY OF RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE BY ENGAGING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS THROUGH OUR MUSEUM AND PROGRAMS

APRIL 2022

OLD RYE WILLOW TREES

This unusual photo, "A freak windstorm spells things in branches of willow trees," appeared in *Life* magazine 85 years ago.



The photo ran in *Life's* March 23, 1937 issue, just in time to reach subscribers by...APRIL FOOL'S DAY!

“Zing Went the Strings”

The 20-10 Challenge to Restore our Rye Violin



RHS members of a certain age may recall the 1930s song, “ Zing Went the Strings of My Heart,” made popular by the incomparable Judy Garland. What? You’re not old enough to remember? Never mind. Right now you can help restore zing to an 1878 violin – a musical instrument made right here in Rye!

The Society recently found the Rye violin among its collection of artifacts. Who made it? Who played it? We hope to find some answers in the weeks to come. In the meantime, the instrument, although in fairly good shape, could use some attention. In addition to a good professional cleaning, it needs new strings and maybe some minor touchups and repairs to get it in playing condition. We’ve found someone who can bring the zing back to the violin but it will cost about \$200. That’s where you come in.

We're looking for 20 generous, good-looking, intelligent (too much?) individuals who would like to help us restore the violin. For a mere \$10.00 each, you can be among those who bring music back to the Rye Historical Society. We will be able to not only play it at events like our upcoming 1800s exhibit opening this summer but also display it proudly in the museum or use it in future exhibitions.

In addition to our gratitude, all donors will receive public acknowledgment in our newsletter as contributors to the 20-10 Violin Challenge. What if we get more than 20 donors? That would be a great problem to have. We’d be able to also purchase some conservation supplies (special acid-free boxes, tissue paper, etc.) to appropriately store the instrument when not in use or on display.

Help us achieve our 20-10 goal by sending your tax-deductible \$10 donation in the name of Rye Historical Society (please put violin challenge in the check’s note section). Checks may be mailed to the RHS, 10 Olde Parish Road/ P.O. Box 583, Rye, NH 03870 no later than May 15th. Or use the donate button below.

We really want to make this violin sing again!

Lew Karabatsos

[DONATE NOW](#)

Memorial Day Trolley Tour

Sponsored by Partners Bank. A narrated 90-minute tour that explores the rich history of Rye Beach north to Rye Harbor, with stops along the way.



Monday, May 30th
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
\$25 per person

[BUY TICKETS](#)

BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Jan Olmstead

Jan has had a career as a nurse practitioner, educator, and business consultant, with a healthy dose of non-profit leadership and advocacy in the areas of the arts, healthcare, and culture. Here's what she says about joining the board of the Rye Historical Society.

What got you interested in Rye history?

I have always had a curious mind with a deep appreciation for our natural resources. You can only imagine my excitement moving to Rye 12 years ago, having been a landlubber all my life. I had lots to learn so I took full advantage of the UNH Extension programs, learning about our natural resources and becoming a Marine Docent teaching ocean literacy. And now I am excited to be focused on my community, Rye.

What is the most exciting part of RHS for you?

Being immersed in local history. I find myself amazed at the depth & breadth of some of the historic collections that the Society houses and protects. I also find myself humbled to learn about those responsible for creating and protecting this treasured land I am fortunate enough to experience.

What is your favorite historical landmark in Rye?

It would have to be the grave site of the Spanish sailors whose bodies were found days after their ship, the Sagunto, had crashed at Smuttynose in a storm the winter of 1813. There is mystery and intrigue surrounding the story, always making it that much more interesting.

I created this oil painting imagining what the doomed Sagunto would have

looked like stretched broken across the ledges.



WHAT YEAR IS IT, ANYWAY?

Early New Englanders sometimes seemed uncertain about what year it was. Terry Packer explains the reason in his second post about the Berry land transfer. Read [Part 2–Dates](#).

Signage for Historic Places in Rye

To celebrate the 400th anniversary of Rye in 2023, the Rye Heritage Commission (RHC) and the Rye Historical Society are looking for volunteers to work on a sub-committee that will propose some historic signs that describe natural areas and the built environment in Rye. This idea was originally hatched by the RHS 400th committee and RHC is now collaborating on the project. Many are familiar with the 1930s big sign on Ocean Boulevard just north of Cable Road that identifies the historic Cable House and the trans-Atlantic cable that came ashore in Rye in 1874. That sign was erected as part of the Federal government's New Deal's WPA program in the 1930s. Imagine more modest, but equally durable signs in selected locations all over Rye. Portsmouth has a variety of exterior signs describing historic places.

In addition to individual volunteers, RHC and RHS will also work with the Historic District Commission, the Conservation commission and the Rye Town Center Committee to get ideas and feedback on our proposal. The signs can be funded in a variety of ways, through grants, private funding or tax payer money. As you move about the town, think about places that are deserving of such signs such as Fairhill salt marsh, the largest in Rye, just south of Odiorne Point, or the Drake House apartment building, formerly the Drake House Hotel, 1873-c. 1968 (Ocean Blvd. and South Road) or Trefethen's Corner (Sagamore at Clark), Madden Realty started as Trefethen's Store in 1947 and many of the houses near the corner were built by the Trefethen family.

The historic house plaque program, which started with RHS, gives you a clear view of how such signage can enhance the heritage of a town. The National Registry of Historic Places sign on Town Hall is another example of signage. Larger signs that require more information on historic public buildings, etc. is

another option. Photos could also enhance the signs. Signs with photos could also bring to life places that have been demolished or burned down such as the Farragut Hotel and Stoneleigh Manor Hotel, later Stoneleigh College. RHS/RHC imagines that some signs will have minimal, larger text in order to be read while driving by, while other signs will have more detail when located where people will be standing in front of them.

The following are some of the tasks related to this project: identifying places for signs (RHS has started a list), researching an affordable but durable material for the signs, looking in Portsmouth and beyond for examples of aesthetically pleasing signs, researching funding for the signs, participating in RHC/RHS work sessions on the signs, researching the exact location of the signs (public or private land), etc. If you are interested in helping with any of these tasks, or others you can think of, please contact RHC/RHS member Alex Herlihy at: alexherlihy@comcast.net or (603) 997-6742.

On its 400th anniversary, this old town by the sea deserves this fine enhancement of its heritage.

Alex Herlihy

THIS MONTH IN RYE HISTORY

April, 1873

OCEAN HOUSE BURNS

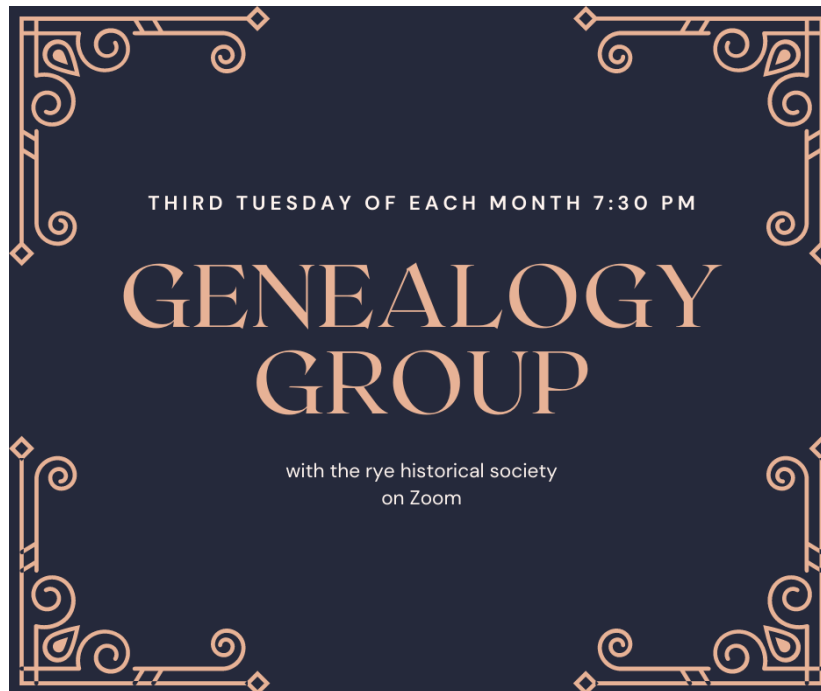


Ocean House. Detail from a stereoscope, New York Public Library

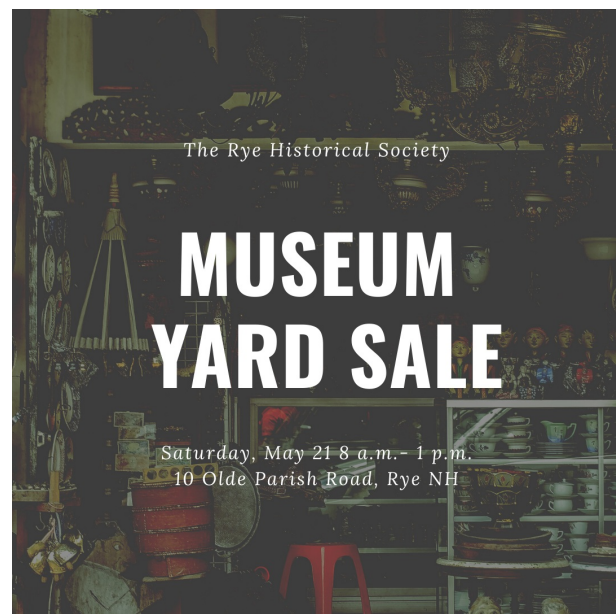
After the first Ocean House at Jenness Beach burned down in 1862, Job Jenness built the bigger, grander Ocean House pictured above. On April 3, 1873, it, too, burned to the ground.

"At the time of its destruction," wrote L. B. Parsons in the *History of Rye, NH*, "no summer hostelry to the eastward of Boston was more widely known or enjoyed a higher reputation, and the townspeople hoped and expected that a third Ocean House would soon rise over its ashes, but this never came to pass. For thirty years after, ... the Ocean House grove, as it continued to be called, was a favorite resort for picnic parties...."

Join the the Genealogy Group's meeting on Zoom
Tuesday, April 19, at 7:30 PM



Save The Date!
Saturday, May 21



Audio tour

Rye Beach Block

★★★★★ [4 reviews](#) | [Rye](#) | Free

Did you know there is a guided walking tour in Rye Beach? [Download the IziTRAVEL app and get started!](#)

Don't want to walk? You can take this tour from the comfort of your easy chair!

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organization**

Rye Historical Society

603-436-9278

info@ryenhhistoricalsociety.org

10 Olde Parish Road, Rye, NH 03870

[Click here to be added to our email list](#)

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