

# OCEAN VIEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY



P.O. Box 576  
Ocean View, DE 19970

[www.facebook.com/oceanviewhistoricalsociety](http://www.facebook.com/oceanviewhistoricalsociety)

## *ANNUAL REPORT TO THE TOWN COUNCIL OF OCEAN VIEW, DELAWARE*

April 16, 2015

### **Introduction**

On May 15, 2010, the Town of Ocean View, Delaware granted the Ocean View Historical Society, Inc. a 15-year Lease Agreement [Attachment 1], extending through May 31, 2025, with a five-year extension available to the Society. As stated in paragraph six of the Lease Agreement, the Society is to annually provide "an operational report of its activities" to the Town, and "an IRS Form 990 Financial Report."

Thus, the purpose of this initial Annual Report is to describe Society accomplishments since its inception through December 31, 2014, the end of the Society's fiscal year, and to provide copies of IRS Forms 990 for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2014 [Attachment 2 and Attachment 10].

Each year, the Society intends to provide the Town of Ocean View with an updated Annual Report of Historical Society operations, and a copy of its current IRS Form 990.

### **Founding of the Ocean View Historical Society**

The Society's origin is traceable back to the election of Dr. Richard Nippes to the Town Council of Ocean View in 2007. Upon assuming office, T. M. Conway Gregory, the then Town Manager, asked Dr. Nippes if he would consider reconstituting a historical committee that the Council had created a few years earlier. For a variety of reasons, this historical committee had become inactive. Town Manager Gregory was a

dedicated historian and realized the value to the Town and its surrounding community to have its history documented. Dr. Nippes had taught social studies for 40 years, and he was very receptive to the request of documenting the Town's past.

Dr. Nippes immediately began to solicit individuals to work on the reconstituted committee. Once the committee had grown to ten members, it drew up a set of goals and guidelines on how to best accomplish the assigned task. The members selected a slate of officers to keep the committee moving forward. The first priority was to set up a schedule for interviewing and recording the recollections of the few remaining long-term senior Town residents. The second priority was travel to the Delaware Archives in Dover and take notes on the Town Minutes that were first recorded in 1889 when the Town was incorporated. Over a period of years, significant knowledge was garnered from a variety of references that included old maps, old newspaper articles, oral histories, the Archives, and information provided by local residents. The Town's history traced from the land grant (known as Middlesex) given in 1688 to Mathew Scarborough by Lord Baltimore of Maryland. This grant consisted of 500 acres and was located in what would have been the current Town center.

As the knowledge base grew, Town Manager Conway Gregory recommended that the committee apply for nonprofit corporate status from the State of Delaware. Although relatively inactive, the Ocean View Historical Society was incorporated as a Delaware nonprofit corporation on January 15, 2008, by the Delaware Secretary of State Harriet Smith Windsor [Attachment 3]. The U.S. Internal Revenue Service determined the Society to be an organization exempt from income tax on May 22, 2008 [Attachment 4]. After a prolonged wait, the IRS responded favorably and granted tax exempt status to the Society pursuant to IRS Section 501(c)(3), which grants charities, such as educational institutions, hospitals, social service entities, etc., the ability to receive gifts which qualify as eligible tax deductions to the donors. On May 22, 2008, the Ocean View Historical Society was assigned a Tax Identification Number of 26-1719840 [Attachment 4]. This permitted the Society to solicit funds that would be used to build and furnish a small historic museum.

One day local resident Jean Athan gave the Town Manager Gregory a thick packet of papers to pass to Society leadership. The packet turned out to be a study that was conducted by the Center for Historic Architecture and Design which is part of the University of Delaware. This study had been commissioned by Jean Athan who owned a historical house in Ocean View. The *Cultural Resources Survey and Final Report* had studied 124 historic homes and the survey concluded that 83 were eligible to become part of a nominated National Historic District if the Council decided to pursue such recognition for that portion of the Town. The Council showed no inclination toward such recognition; thus, the study lay dormant with no Council action. However, the *Survey* of historic homes in Ocean View has played a paramount role in determining the direction of the Society, and the Society considers the historic homes *Survey* an important reference document in its Archives.

Using his Council position, Dr. Nippes saw the opportunity to create a Local Historic District within the Town. He began working with Town Solicitor Dennis Schrader to create a set of guidelines and designate the actual streets to be included. A workshop designated to present a preliminary proposal generated discussion *pro* and *con* from residents whose homes would be located in the District. While this issue was being discussed, the Town Council was dealing with the issue of the historic home that it owned. The house, later known as the Tunnell-West house, was purchased in 2001 by the Town of Ocean View from the Shores family. The Shores house and lot were contiguous to the John T. West Park and its purchase expanded the Park.

Due to its dilapidated condition, the Shores house was a financial burden and some Council members favored having the house demolished while others favored trying to give it away to anyone that would move it off Town property. Dr. Nippes realized that, if the house was demolished, it would have a devastating impact on how residents would view the Local Historic District. Preservation of the house would ensure the likely creation of the Local Historic District.



**Shores House, 2001**



The Society's Board had previously looked into using the Shores house as its museum, but rejected the idea because of serious reservations about its structural integrity. Previous studies and reports indicated termite damage existed under the

house and the foundation was crumbling causing walls to shift. The Shores house foundation and the underneath structures could not be examined from the outside, so doubt permeated the minds of most Society Board members.

At this crucial decision-making moment, a game changing event presented itself. Dr. Nippes was invited to a meeting sponsored by the organization Delaware Preservation. The primary item on the agenda was the announcement of a joint venture by Delaware Preservation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. At that time, a number of specific historic buildings in Sussex County had been destroyed and fear existed that other properties would be targeted because of the housing boom occurring in the County. These two preservationist organizations joined forces to hire a professional preservation expert to help prevent this impending destruction of historic properties. The individual hired for the task was Christine Thomas, a woman with tremendous credentials. She made a short presentation in which she offered to come to any community that needed expertise in the area of preservation. Dr. Nippes saw this as a possible solution to his dilemma and invited her to come to the Town of Ocean View.

Ms. Thomas followed through on her offer and came to evaluate the Shores house as a possible candidate for preservation and ultimate restoration. After a careful inspection of the exterior and interior, she told the Society Board that the Shores house was structurally sound. The majority of the Board was not convinced and cited the reports about termite damage and a crumbling foundation. Since it was impossible to get under the house for an inspection, Christine Thomas asked a couple of Society members to cut a hole in the floor to gain access to the crawl space under the house. Once the hole had been cut, she slid through the opening onto the dirt base. The dirt was only about 12 inches below the floor joists. After a careful analysis of the floor joists, she said there was no sign of termite damage and the majority of the foundation was good for years to come, except the east wall of the house. A sun room had been added to the house in the 1970's but the roof where it joined the original house had not been constructed correctly. The connecting joint was improperly installed allowing water to leak into the wall and supporting foundation. This sun room was demolished, and the foundation and east wall were totally rebuilt.

A substantial majority of the Board did a complete reversal and endorsed the goal of saving the Shores house and restoring it to look as it did when built in the 1860's. This resolved one issue, but the Shores house was still owned by the Town and demolition was still on the table. Christine Thomas, the preservationist expert, asked the Society Board to have her placed on the agenda at a future Town Council meeting. At the meeting, she made a cohesive argument of why preserving the Shores house would prove to be a valuable asset economically as a result of increased tourism visiting the historic complex. The Council accepted the argument and voted unanimously to give the Society a period of time to raise the necessary funds to restore the house. Town Solicitor Dennis Schrader was requested to draw up a lease giving the Society the right to work on the Shores house and use the property for future restoration projects.



During the past four years, the Society has raised around \$100,000 and completely restored the house and opened it for tours.



*Tunnell-West House, Summer 2014*

### **Governance of the Society**

The Ocean View Historical Society is governed by a 13-member volunteer Board of Directors. Officers include a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Communications Director. Other Board members at large and resource personnel are appointed to specific committee assignments such as Education Director, Building Supervisor, Resource Development, Membership Chair, Curator of Artifacts, and other duties as deemed necessary by the Board. For a full description of the governing rules of the Ocean View Historical Society, see its current By-Laws [Attachment 5].

The Society's first organizational meeting took place in 2007, and the early Board members included organizer, Dr. Richard Nippes, who was also an Ocean View Town Council Member, and founding President, Janet Batlan. Other key members included Dianne Dee, Lene Kuhblank, Mary Van Scoyoc, Jo Anne Weber, Felice Arnold, Mary McLaughlin, Wanda Powell, Carol Hurley, Bob Seamans, Shirley Price, Faith Fitzgerald, and Nancy Hull. By 2009, Bonnie Harvey, Glenn Timmons, and George Keen joined the Board, and by 2010, Rose Parsons.

Annually, the Society pays a nominal fee to maintain its Delaware nonprofit status. The most recent receipt is included in [Attachment 6].

There is no requirement that Board Members live within the town limits of Ocean View, and residents of other local communities have made significant contributions to Society goals. The 2015-2016 Society Board Members and Resource Personnel are listed below.

Ocean View Historical Society  
Board of Trustees  
(April 2015-March 2016)

01.	Dr. Carol Psaros (302) 539-5653	President	39825 Dukes Road Bethany Beach 19930	<a href="mailto:ckpsaros@aol.com">ckpsaros@aol.com</a>
02.	Gordon Rickards (484) 432-6717	Vice-President	605 Freeport Blvd Bethany Beach 19930	<a href="mailto:gorickards@gmail.com">gorickards@gmail.com</a>
03.	Bert Edwards (302) 537-2181	Treasurer	3 Briarcliff Ct. Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:berttedwards@mediacombb.net">berttedwards@mediacombb.net</a>
04.	Dr. Richard Nippes (302) 539-8374	Acting Secretary	2 Briarcliff Ct. Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:drnippes@aol.com">drnippes@aol.com</a>
05.	Lene Kuhblank (302) 539-3052	Communications Director	34 Osprey Lane Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:thekubes@verizon.net">thekubes@verizon.net</a>
06.	Barbara Slavin (302) 593-8814	Education Director	41 West Ave. PO Box 256 Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:slavinbe1@yahoo.com">slavinbe1@yahoo.com</a>
07.	Kathie Barrow (302) 537-6713	Membership Chair	3 Kenneth Pl. Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:atthebeachkbl@aol.com">atthebeachkbl@aol.com</a>
08.	Donna Stitz (302) 541-5659	Curator/Artifacts	40 Reeping Way Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:DonnaJ.Stitz@gmail.com">DonnaJ.Stitz@gmail.com</a>
09.	Mike Read (302) 539-0533	Member at Large	722 Fox Trail Bethany Beach 19930	<a href="mailto:mikenjenread@yahoo.com">mikenjenread@yahoo.com</a>
10.	Jean Athan (302) 569-8550	Member at Large	P.O. Box 1339 Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:eugeniaathan@gmail.com">eugeniaathan@gmail.com</a>
11.	Fran Feighery (302) 539-6570	Member at Large	29857 Sawmill Dr. Dagsboro 19939	<a href="mailto:fefdelaware@mchsi.com">fefdelaware@mchsi.com</a>
12.	Bob Svenson (302) 541-5062	Member at Large	11 Woodland Ave. Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:bbsvenson@verizon.net">bbsvenson@verizon.net</a>
13.	Kimberly Grimes (302)258-7470	Coastal Towns Museum Representative	31 W. Atlantic Street Fenwick Island, 19944	<a href="mailto:kimgrimes55@gmail.com">kimgrimes55@gmail.com</a>

Ocean View Historical Society  
Resource Personnel

George Keen (302) 539-1889	Building Committee	29554 Keoki Ct. Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:GGKBJK@gmail.com">GGKBJK@gmail.com</a> (302)569-2274 cell
Bob Slavin (302) 593-1354	Resource Development	232 Oyster Shell Cove Bethany Beach 19930	<a href="mailto:bobslavin1@gmail.com">bobslavin1@gmail.com</a>
Bonnie Harvey (302) 541-9237	Former Treasurer	17 Caseys Way Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:bonniejh723@yahoo.com">bonniejh723@yahoo.com</a> (610)247-2348 cell
Diane Dee (302) 541-0911	Former President	3 Amandas Court Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:Deedm2002@yahoo.com">Deedm2002@yahoo.com</a>
Mary McLaughlin (302) 541-4587	Former Secretary	35 Reeping Way Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:marymc1729@yahoo.com">marymc1729@yahoo.com</a>
Marsha Evans (302) 537-9278	Facebook Administrator	32652 Cedar Drive Millville 19967	<a href="mailto:marsha.a.evans@gmail.com">marsha.a.evans@gmail.com</a>
Glenn Timmons (302) 539-3099	Video Specialist	38590 Hickman Road Ocean View 19970	<a href="mailto:getimmons@msn.com">getimmons@msn.com</a>

### Mission Statement

***The Ocean View Historical Society's mission is to preserve, interpret and collect the history of Ocean View and the Baltimore Hundred area, sharing our past with all communities that comprise the Ocean View area by building an identity that will enable us to wisely approach the challenge the future will bring to Delaware's coastal towns.***

### Goals and Objectives

Sustained by its members and volunteers, and supported by the generosity of local communities, the Ocean View Historical Society strives to achieve its goals.

- ◆ Develop and operate a center/museum for a variety of community educational activities and displays of artifacts.
- ◆ Collect, preserve and interpret local history, artifacts, and records.
- ◆ Promote community events of historical significance.
- ◆ Encourage the preservation and restoration of local historical assets.

# Ocean View Historical Complex Strategic Plan

## 2017 Vision

By 2017, the Ocean View Historical Complex will be an antique village for visitors to stroll through along landscaped paths. The Complex will be opened from 1-4 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons between Memorial Day and Labor Day, and at other times during the fall and winter, as arranged for school or other group tours, or for special Society events. Signs will be placed outside the Complex buildings for strollers to read when the historic buildings are not unlocked. The Coastal Towns Museum will be opened in the Evans-West House on publicly announced days. To aid in securing funds for remodeling, both the Evans -West House and its Sussex style antique barn, will be placed on the National Register of Historic Structures. The garage behind the Tunnell-West House will be demolished, pending successful fundraising to build Hall's General Store, a public meeting area and educational center for the complex.

## 2020 Vision

By 2020, the Ocean View Historical Complex will be an antique village for visitors to stroll through along landscaped paths. The tour will include two vintage homes, the Tunnell-West House circa 1860, and the Evans-West House, circa 1901, which functions as the Coastal Towns Museum. The Complex will also include the first free-standing Post Office in Ocean View, an outhouse, an exact replica of Cecile Steele's first chicken house, a functioning hand pump, an old Sussex County barn, and a replication of Hall's General Store, which functions as a Visitor and Education Center for the Complex.

### Strategic Steps to Realizing the 2020 Vision

- ◆ Place the Evans- West House and its barn on the National Register. (in progress)
- ◆ Initiate fundraising activities to secure grants and raise funds to remodel the Evans-West House to become the Coastal Towns Museum, to build Hall's General Store Visitor and Education Center, and to landscape the complex. (in progress)
- ◆ Retain an architect to draw up plans for Hall's General Store. (completed)
- ◆ Secure a company to demolish the garage. (not started)
- ◆ Maintain the historic buildings currently within the Ocean View Historical Complex . (on-going)



## Current Renovation and Restoration Activity

### *Tunnell-West House*



The restored Gothic Revival house has been named the Tunnell-West house after the original owners. The house is now listed on the National Registry of Historic Places as determined by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Exterior renovations involved demolishing the sun room and rebuilding the back wall, installing a cedar shake roof, removing a layer of vinyl siding along with a layer of asbestos siding, remediating lead paint that covered the original siding and replacing about one-third of the wood siding, and painting the entire building. The interior presented numerous construction challenges. Over the years different owners had added conveniences to modernize the living space. Some of these changes included a modern bathroom on the first floor, electricity, heating elements, kitchen appliances, and modern windows. A historical carpenter was brought in who removed plaster and paneling to determine the original configuration of the house. Once this was accomplished, all modern additions were removed, walls were returned to period style, and an 1860's porch was built. The Tunnell-West House was painted and furnished with Civil War era appropriate pieces of furniture. The House is now totally restored and open for tours.

## *First Free Standing Town Post Office*



***Post Office at original West Avenue Location***



***Restored 1889 Post Office, fall 2014***

During one of the oral history sessions, the local lady being interviewed, Carolyn Brunner, mentioned that the first free standing U.S. Post Office was still located on a vacant lot on West Avenue. The Society contacted the lot owner, Shirley Reed, who said she was about to have the Post Office demolished because it was badly deteriorated. The Society asked if she would donate the building so that it could be restored. She was thrilled that the Post Office would be preserved, so she transferred ownership and gave her permission to have it moved. The building was relocated by East Coast Structural Movers from the West Avenue lot to a place behind the Tunnell-West House. It was elevated on three-foot high cinder block pillars so that a foundation could be reconstructed under it. Once the foundation was completed, the Post Office was lowered onto its permanent base. The front of the Post Office was badly deteriorated and had to be rebuilt, including the front door and windows. A new cedar shake roof was added and the siding repaired and repainted.

One day local resident Ruppert Smith offered to donate the original counter front and some mail boxes that he had earlier removed from the 1889 Post Office with the owner's permission. The metal counter front, behind which the Post Mistress sold

stamps and serviced customers, was restored. The mail boxes with combinations were restored and attached to a wall of boxes simulating the original mail center. In 1889, when this Post Office was built, the Post Mistress was Annie Betts West, whose father was George Handy West, the first Council President (Mayor) of Ocean View, who also owned and built the Tunnell-West House while working as a ship Captain and farming his many acres. Annie's husband, Sam Betts, was a ship Captain who had perished at sea, so she had a need for income. She set up a millinery shop in the back of the Post Office and sold hats to people as they came for their mail. Restoration work remains to be done to patch the original plaster walls and renew the shelves at the back of the Post Office where Annie displayed her hats. The Post Office front section is fully restored and open for tours.



***Restored Mail Boxes***

## ***Outhouse***

Society members wanted to find an outhouse to show children and others, how difficult life was in 1860. After a search of the community, one was located and donated by Russell and Dianne Archut. The outhouse was built by Charles E. Johnson, who lived at 83 Atlantic Avenue and worked as a town butcher, country store owner, and chicken farmer. Mr. Johnson was a major Ocean View landowner who sold acres which were developed into the Lord Baltimore School, Woodland Estates, the Cottages, Bear Trap Dunes, and housing areas along Woodland Avenue, Whites Creek and Hudson Avenue. Dianne Archut is the great-granddaughter of Charles E. Johnson.

The Society moved the outhouse from Atlantic Avenue and placed it at the rear of the Tunnell-West House. The dilapidated structure was restored by the Society and given a coat of paint. The non-functioning outhouse is a "two-holer," and is a very popular



exhibit at the complex.



*Original*

*and*

*Restored Outhouse*

### *Replica Poultry House*

The Society soon realized that the Complex was incomplete since there was no poultry house. In 1923, an Ocean View farm wife, Cecile Steele ordered 50 biddies to replace her stock of layers for her egg sales. In an error, she was sent 500 baby chicks instead. Cecile raised the brood, selling the more than 300 surviving chicks for 62 cents a pound. Cecile was smart enough and enterprising enough to realize that she could make much more profit selling the chickens instead of their eggs. She asked her husband Wilmer to build her a chicken house and she ordered 1,000 biddies the next year. Soon the Steele's were raising thousands of broilers, and Ocean View became the "broiler chicken capital" of the United States. Chicken houses began to appear throughout the Town and surrounding areas, and feed companies, bag companies, crate companies, vaccinating companies, and shipping companies sprang up, helping insulate Sussex County from the 1929 stock market crash and global depression.



***State of Delaware Historic Marker***



***Cecile Steele First Chicken House***

Research discovered that the original Steele chicken house was still in existence and was on display at the Delaware Agricultural Museum in Dover. The curator of the Museum was contacted about allowing the chicken house to return to Ocean View for display. The request was declined and Society pursued a different option. The David Murray Construction Company, that had done the restoration work for the Tunnell-West House, was asked if it could build a replica of the chicken house. Staff went to the Museum in Dover and took pictures and secured detailed measurements. To finance this project, the Society sought special funding. Ed Kee, the Secretary of Agriculture for the State of Delaware, agreed to pay for the lumber to build the poultry house. Mountaire Chicken Processing Company agreed to pay for the labor costs to construct the replica Poultry House. The actual lumber came from a local saw mill that specializes in producing lumber as it was done in the 19th century. The Poultry House was built and is an identical replica of the Steele's original. The artifacts that complete the interior were all donated by local residents who had been in the broiler chicken business. The Poultry House is now complete and open for tours.

### ***Proposed Evans-West House Coastal Towns Museum***

A long-term Society goal has been to join with other coastal towns --- Bethany Beach, South Bethany, Fenwick Island and Millville --- to create a regional museum for the Baltimore Hundred. The problem was finding a historic building or land to build such a museum. Local coastal towns were very interested, but no building existed, nor was a piece of land available to lease for building such a museum. Thus this goal was just a distant dream.

Recently, a generous gift has made this distant goal a reality for the near future. A local long-time Ocean View resident, Mrs. Carolyn Brunner, decided to donate her summer historic home to the Society. As an antique collector, she had previously donated many of the furnishings currently on display in the Tunnel-West House. The Society restorations have been very exciting and encouraging to her. Her house and adjacent



Sussex County Barn were built by her grandparents, James Evans and Mary Cottingham West Evans in 1900 and had remained in the family since that time. Mrs. Brunner and her son realized that, if she sold the house, the new owner would likely demolish the old building and build anew because of the prime location of the property adjacent to the John West Park. She knew that, if the property was donated to the Society, it would preserve the homestead. The property is a Gothic Revival style house built in 1901 and also includes a unique barn constructed in 1900. Ownership will transfer to the Historical Society in 2017, or before, and permission has been given to begin restoration immediately on the barn, which was in danger of collapse. The Society has authorized spending \$10,000 to stabilize the barn and completely restore its façade to its original appearance. As weather permits, the south and west walls are being restored, and the funds to pay for this part of the restoration are currently in the Society's Capital Building Fund.

***Evans-West House, winter 2015***



***Evans-West House Barn, winter 2015***



***Barn stabilized, not restored***



This new acquisition enabled the Society to move forward with its goal of creating a regional museum in the Baltimore Hundred. The towns of Bethany Beach, South Bethany, Fenwick Island, and Millville have agreed to partner with the Society to design and help create a Coastal Towns Museum to tell the story of the coastal towns in Baltimore Hundred, and serve as a tourist attraction. The Chair of the Coastal Towns Committee, elected annually, sits as a voting member on the Society Board.

### Coastal Towns Museum Standing Committee

Fenwick Island	Kimberly Grimes* <a href="mailto:Kimgrimes55@gmail.com">Kimgrimes55@gmail.com</a> 31 W. Atlantic Street Fenwick Island, DE 19944 (302)258-7470	Winnie Lewis <a href="mailto:pacing1@comcast.net">pacing1@comcast.net</a> 706 Bunting Avenue Fenwick Island, DE 19944 (302)537-9235	
Millville	Deborah Y. Botchie* <a href="mailto:mvtownmgr@mchsi.com">mvtownmgr@mchsi.com</a> 36404 Club House Road Millville, DE 19967 (302)519-3303	Bob Linett 8985 Home Guard Drive Burke, VA 22015 (703)346-4024	
South Bethany	Maria Johansen* <a href="mailto:BethanyBabel@aol.com">BethanyBabel@aol.com</a> 3 South Anchorage Avenue South Bethany, DE 19930 (302)539-8294	Mary L. Suazo <a href="mailto:msuazz@msn.com">msuazz@msn.com</a> 7 South 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street South Bethany, DE 19930 (703)963-6663	Nancy McCarthy <a href="mailto:bobmccarthy53@gmail.com">bobmccarthy53@gmail.com</a> 14500 Wright Street Unit 503 Ocean City, MD 21842 (410)250-7821
Bethany Beach	Theo Loppatto* <a href="mailto:theofulton@verizon.net">theofulton@verizon.net</a> 614 Second Street Bethany Beach, DE 19930 (302)537-5661	Carol Olmstead <a href="mailto:carolatbethany@aol.com">carolatbethany@aol.com</a> 426 Lekites Avenue Bethany Beach, DE 19930 (302)539-2740	
Ocean View	Diane Dee* <a href="mailto:Deedm2002@yahoo.com">Deedm2002@yahoo.com</a> 3 Amandas Court Ocean View, DE 19970 (302)541-0911	Carol Psaros <a href="mailto:ckpsaros@aol.com">ckpsaros@aol.com</a> 39825 Dukes Road Bethany Beach, DE 19930 (302)539-5653	

\*indicates official Town Committee Member for 2015-2016

\*indicates Standing Committee Chair and OVHS Board Member for 2015-2016

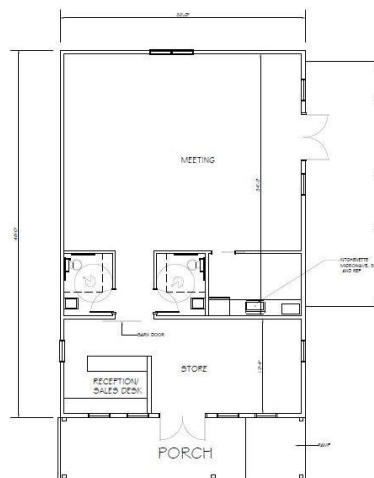
## *Proposed Visitor and Education Center*

To complete its 2020 Vision, the Society seeks to build a Visitor and Education Center on the east portion of its Complex that will be the starting point and education center for school children and others wishing to tour the Complex and Museum. The Society's architect, John Hendrickson, has designed a 1,500 square foot building that will serve two functions. The front of the building will be a replica of Hall's Country Store. Hall's Store was built around 1820, and also served as the Post Office in 1822. Hall's Store became the accepted name of the Town until 1889, when the Town secured incorporation and changed its official name to Ocean View. The front of Hall's Store Visitor and Education Center will be configured like an old time country store, and include a visitor's desk to distribute tour information. The back of the Center will be a large room which will provide wall space for displays and a classroom for educational programs. Teachers from local schools will be able to bring classes for special historical programs and seminars. Fund-raising efforts are currently under way to raise the estimated \$250,000 necessary to build this Visitor and Education Center.

### *Architect's Drawing of Hall's Store Visitor and Education Center*



FRONT ELEVATION



FLOOR PLAN  
1,500 S.F. GROSS

## **Community Programs**

### **Ocean View Homecoming**

This Report would be incomplete without a summary of the historical programs the Society has provided to Town and surrounding community residents. Research discovered that Ocean View held a community event from the early 1900's until 1941. Many residents had to leave the Ocean View area to find work, but were encouraged to return in August to renew relationships that had formed while living in Ocean View. Local residents organized the event and it was called "Homecoming." It was held annually until 1942 when it ended because of WWII and rationing. Historical records indicate that in 1940 and 1941, as many as 5,000 people attended Ocean View's Homecoming. Five years ago, the Society initiated a new "Homecoming Event" and, this May, the sixth annual event will be held on May 9, 2015. During Homecoming, all Historical Complex buildings are open free of charge to the public with docents on site. The annual Homecoming event is a joint venture between the Town and the Society. Ocean View Town Manager, Diane Vogel, has assumed the primary responsibility for planning and obtaining the finances to fund the event. The event attracts hundreds of visitors each year to the John West Park.

### **Public Lectures**

The Society has provided numerous free historical lectures and programs for the community, conducted by Society members and/or others who have special local historical knowledge or skills. The Society strives to find new and interactive ways to "tell the story" of the history and growth of Ocean View and Baltimore Hundred. With the support of the Town, public lectures are held at least twice a year in the Ocean View Town Hall at 39 West Avenue, located adjacent to the Historical Complex. Past lecture topics have included *Civil War Delaware*, *History of Sussex County*, *Genealogy of the Tunnell-West Family*, *History of Hall's Store*, *Maritime Life of the Coastal Towns*, *Growth of the Poultry Industry*, *Interview with President Lincoln*, and other topics. Lectures are video-taped and DVD copies sold at the nominal fee of \$5. Please see sample flyers denoting the focus of some of our past Public Lectures [Attachment 7].

### **Public Open Houses**

In addition to being open during Homecoming, the Society's Historic Complex is open on Wednesday afternoons during the summer months to accommodate the thousands of visitors who flock to the local beaches and may be seeking to visit local attractions. There is no admission fee, but donations are welcomed in the Society donations jar. In 2014, the Coastal Towns Museum group published a brochure, *Take A Walk Back in Time, Rain or Shine*, [Attachment 11] that highlights historical sites beachgoers can see on a rainy day (or any day). The Ocean View Historical Complex is a featured attraction of the brochure which is placed in each Town Office and at other prominent public locations. This year, two information boxes were installed at the Complex and are kept filled with a one page flyer describing the Tunnell-West House,

the Post Office, and the Poultry House, for visitors who arrive when the buildings were not open. The second Saturday in December, the Society hosts its annual Christmas Open House where all buildings are open and decorated with natural greens. This year, the historic home of Society Board member Barbara Slavin was added and decorated for public enjoyment. Over 100 people attended the 2014 Christmas Open House where a live musician played a mandola in the parlor and sweets, egg nog, and hot cider were offered in the keeping room. The Society continues to foster a sense of pride and cohesiveness in Ocean View through its numerous cultural contributions and the preservation of its local architectural history. Local press articles and flyer's describing some of the recent special events are collected in [Attachment 7].

### **Presentations to Local Groups**

Upon request, Society officers and members speak to local groups such as the Bethany Beach Womens' Club, The Lionesses, the Romeo's, and the American Association of Retired Persons about the Society's programs and goals. In 2014, Vice-President Carol Psaros created a video for group view showing the Society's restored buildings and scenes from Society Open Houses and Public Lectures. She also updated the Society's brochure [Attachment 8] which is distributed at such events, along with the Society's Membership Form [Attachment 9].

### **Annual Fall Fundraising Event**

Each September, Society members and others have gathered at the Historical Complex for an outdoor barbeque and cocktail party. It is a social time of feasting and sharing that includes an under-the-tent BBQ dinner and auction. Over the years, the event has on average raised \$4,000 a year, but has been stressful because of the uncertainty of weather and the inadequacy of cover from rain, wind, or unusual heat or cold. This fall the Society plans a cocktail reception on September 19, 2015, at the Historic Complex, followed by a sit down dinner with entertainment at the Ocean View Church of Christ's new Fellowship Hall.

### **Communications**

The Society uses a variety of electronic and print media to keep its members and the public informed of its numerous activities. In 2014, the Society established a Facebook page thanks to member, Marsha Evans, who, without compensation, created the site and serves as its administrator. [www.facebook.com/oceanviewhistoricalsociety](http://www.facebook.com/oceanviewhistoricalsociety). The Society's homepage, established several years ago by Tom Harvey, Board member Bonnie Harvey's son, is currently under renovation, [www.ovhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.ovhistoricalsociety.org) and should be up and running again by June 2015.

Local and State newspapers and other publications have been supportive of Society events. Maria Counts, a reporter with *The Coastal Point* weekly newspaper, has attended nearly every public event the Society has offered and been most generous in

writing pre- and post-event articles, and including pictures. The Society sincerely thanks the following news outlets for their coverage of our historical activities.

- ◆ *The Coastal Point*
- ◆ *The Wave*
- ◆ Bette Meredith's Column in *The Wave*
- ◆ *The News Journal* of Wilmington
- ◆ *Coastal Delaware* – Sunday insert in *The News Journal*
- ◆ *Delaware Beach Life* magazine
- ◆ *Calendar of Events* in above publications

Please see [Attachment 7] for a sampling of recent news articles.

The Society's Communication Director, Lene Kuhblank, sends regular electronic and/or print communication to all members, current and otherwise, about upcoming Board Meetings, Lectures, Open Houses, or historical events sponsored by the State or other towns. Over time, we have improved our communication methods and now have established a good track record for effectively informing the public in advance.

A Calendar of Events is published each year to inform Board Members, Members, and the general public of upcoming activities.

2015-2016 CALENDAR  
Ocean View Historical Society

April 16, 2015                      Board Meeting                      3:00 pm South Coastal Library

April 22, 2015                      Public Lecture                      OV Old Town Hall 7:00 pm

Sussex County in WW II

May 9, 2015    Ocean View Homecoming    Complex Open to Public    WWII Enactors

May 21, 2015                      Board Meeting                      3:00 pm South Coastal Library

May 27, 2015                      Complex Open Every Wednesday through Sept 2 1:00-4:00 pm

Docents Present

June 18, 2015                      Board Meeting                      3:00 pm South Coastal Library

July	No Board Meeting	
August 20, 2015	Board Meeting	3:00 pm South Coastal Library
September 19, 2015	OVHS Fundraiser	Complex and Church of Christ-Sussex Co.
	HoeDown	
October 15, 2015	Board Meeting	3:00 pm South Coastal Library

2015-2016 CALENDAR  
Ocean View Historical Society

November	Public Lecture	TBA (or February/March)
November 19, 2015	Board Meeting	3:00 pm South Coastal Library
December	No Board Meeting	
December 12, 2015	Christmas Open House	OV Historical Complex
January 21, 2016	Board Meeting	3:00 pm South Coastal Library
February 18, 2016	Board Meeting	3:00 pm South Coastal Library
March 17, 2015	Board Meeting	3:00 pm South Coastal Library
April 21, 2015	Board Meeting	3:00 pm South Coastal Library

**Membership**

As of March 31, 2015, the Ocean View Historical Society has 162 individuals on its membership roster. Annual membership dues are currently \$25 for an individual member and \$45 for a family membership. See [Attachment 9] for current Membership Form.



Membership has grown significantly since the conception of Ocean View Historical Society with its ten core members. Membership dues provide a significant amount of resources used to fund the Operating Budget and daily expenses of the Society. The Officers and Board Members are drawn from the list of members. Most importantly, the future success of the Society depends on expanding membership and the resulting community support that emanates from growing membership. It is essential that we attract new members who will continue our historical activities and expand the role of the Society in Ocean View and surrounding communities.

### **Artifacts**

When a donor offers artifacts to the Society, before acceptance, the item's historical significance is considered, as well as current display/storage space.

When items are approved and accepted, the Society President sends a letter of acceptance, thanking the donor and briefly describing the item(s). The letter can be used as receipt for Internal Revenue Tax deduction purposes, but the letter does not list the value of the item(s). The estimated value of the donated item(s) is between the donor and the Internal Revenue Service. The Society does not attempt to estimate the value of donated items, a practice followed by most similar nonprofit entities.

Items are photographed and assigned an ID number, which includes the year the item is entered into the Artifacts Data Base. This digital inventory includes a description of the item, who donated it, and its current location, e.g., Ocean View Town Hall, Tunnell-West House, Post Office, etc. The Society's inventory currently lists 155 items, and a hard copy of the artifacts list and pictures are kept by the Artifacts Chair Person/Curator, who also has a key to the three display cases, located in the Ocean View Old Town Hall.

### **Historical Affiliations**

To date, the Society has partnered with several State and national historical organizations. In 2014, the Society became an Affiliate with the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. Division Director, Dr. Tim Slavin, and four curator staff, visited the Society's Complex to provide restoration advice and describe ways the Society might enhance its programs using Delaware historic and cultural resources. In 2013, then Society President Dianne Dee and Kimberly Grimes, Delaware Humanities Forum member, led a coordinated effort with other local Historical Societies and the Town of Ocean View to bring a Smithsonian traveling exhibit, *The Way We Work*, to the Ocean View Town Hall. Society members, along with other local historical society members, served as docents for the exhibit.

In February 2015, several members of the Coastal Towns Museum Committee attended the Small Museum Association convention in Ocean City, Maryland, to gain insight into establishing a local museum.

Much can be learned from talking with others who have successfully created local museums and historic displays. Society members visited The Seaford Museum, The Delmarva Discovery Museum, and the Lewes Historical Society's buildings. The Coastal Towns Museum Committee met with the Director of the Rehoboth Museum, and members of the Society Board met with the President of the Rehoboth Historical Society. Affiliations and connections with other local and State historical groups is on-going and important for achieving the Society's mission and goals

### **Summary of Financial Operations 2011-2014**

The Society has accounted for its resources in two separate accounts - the Operating Account and The Capital Projects Account. For the past four years, the resources and uses from these two accounts have been limited as described below.

- Operating Account - This account is used for membership dues, certain special events revenues, donations restricted for operations, etc. The Operating Account revenues and expenses have averaged \$8,000 during 2011-2014, and are used for licenses and permits, insurance, utilities and security, postage, supplies, printing, advertising, etc. The Society has never employed paid staff and relies on volunteers as docents for open house events, lecture presenters, musicians and entertainers, auctioneers, refreshments for special events, correspondence, etc.
- Capital Account - This account is used principally for grants from foundations and other philanthropic organizations, and its uses are restricted to renovation and construction of Society historic buildings. These revenues and expenses have averaged \$50,000 during 2011-2014.

The Appendix of this Report documents the revenue and expenses of the Society for the four years ended December 31, 2014.

- For IRS Forms 990 for years 2011, 2012, and 2013, see [Attachment 2]
- For IRS Form 990 for year 2014, refer to financial statements in [Attachment 10]. The Society's 2014 IRS Form is due to be filed on or prior to May 15, 2015.

Each year, Society Board Members review the IRS Tax Return at a monthly meeting. Additionally, the Society makes its financial information and income tax returns available to the public upon request.

### **Funding Philosophy and Procedure**

Restoration of historic assets depends on funding from philanthropic organizations that promote historic preservation, and from individuals and businesses. Completion of an application is not a guarantee that a nonprofit entity applicant will be selected to receive a grant. When funds are received, the donor organization expects the funds to be used for the purpose granted, not placed in a bank account and held. Thus, the Society has a prioritized list of restoration projects, and, when funds become available, a project is undertaken.

Our contractors give us a cost for a specific job and a contract is drawn. Work is never commenced unless the funds to pay for the work are in the bank. Current funds are ear-marked for the Evans-West barn restoration of the south and west walls as soon as weather permits. Establishment of a Coastal Towns Museum within the Evan-West House, once full possession is taken, will also depend on raising the necessary funds. Over the past five years, in excess of \$150,000 has been granted and expended on the restoration projects previously highlighted.

The building of the Hall's Store Visitor and Education Center will depend upon raising the total estimated cost of \$250,000 before construction is initiated. Bob Slavin, a professional fund raiser, has volunteered as the Society's acting consultant who helps the Society seek potential donors and complete the complicated applications to major philanthropic organizations in Delaware that consider funding a major construction project. Once \$250,000 has been received, the bidding process for Hall's Store Visitor and Education Center will commence.

## **Conclusion**

***The Ocean View Historical Society has made great progress in a relatively short time to begin preserving and sharing the history of Ocean View, Delaware, and the Baltimore Hundred. Accomplishments are due to a talented group of citizens with a love of history who volunteer their unique skills to make Society goals a reality. With vital contributions by the Society's current and former Board Members and Officers, dues-paying community members, Town of Ocean View officials, local businesses, philanthropic funders, and prior professional fundraiser, Mary Lou Tietz, the Society is well on its way to achieving its stated mission and goals.***