



Friends of Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters
2021 ANNUAL REPORT





Friends of Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters

2021, the first full year of our existence, saw amazing progress for the Friends of Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters despite the pandemic setbacks. Working with the Town of Greenburgh, we were able to start the work of restoring the building and creating a museum by 2026. With the help of more than 100 donors and grants, we raised more than \$55,000 and began to learn all the stories Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters can tell.

BOARD ACTIVITIES

Working in the cold, dusty house during the winter, our Board members and volunteers sorted and packed all of the artifacts and furniture on the first two floors of the house. We found neglected treasures and piles of broken pottery, linen sheets from the 18th century underneath fallen plaster, beautiful salt glazed pots and jugs, stacks of old horseshoes and more! The Friends bought packing crates, moving blankets and cleaning supplies and rented a storage room at Westy's in Elmsford. Town DPW workers came with a large moving truck and we filled the first room by February. A second room was rented soon after and by the end of March, the house was empty enough for the shoring to begin.

In May, our President and founder, Susan Seal, was the honored recipient of the Sy Schulman Award. This award is given each year at their annual meeting by the WCHS to the person who had contributed the most to historical preservation in Westchester. Mary Jane Shimsky, the County Legislator for Greenburgh, also had the County designate May 26, 2021, as Susan Seal Day. She was greatly humbled by this designation and knows it could

not have happened without the help of all our members and the cooperation of the Town of Greenburgh.

In July we welcomed Sal Lilienthal as the W3R Bike and Boat tour came to OHRH. Sal traced the route of the French forces from Newport to Greenburgh using his bicycle and kayak. He went all the way to Yorktown, VA. by land and sea, just as the troops had in 1781.

From April through the summer, the Friends concentrated on the plans for Colonial Day. Originally planned for the fall of 2020, Covid had twice delayed it but on September 18th, 2021, over 400 people came to Ridge Road Park to hear the story of OHRH and learn that right there, on the same ground we stood, French soldiers had camped in 1781. We had the 5th New York regiment demonstrate marching, Benjamin Franklin visited, there were blacksmiths, a weaver, broom maker and toys. Children marched with the soldiers, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Mary Jane Shimsky and Paul Feiner all spoke and a great time was had by all. We are planning to reprise the event in 2023 and more details will be coming soon.

For Colonial Day, the Friends created a pop-up museum



OHRH President Susan Seal welcomes visitors, reenactors and special guests to the 2021 Colonial Day event.

inside Pavillion One. That exhibit was displayed at the Greenburgh Library for three months before being moved to Greenville Elementary School and then Ardsley Middle School. As of June 13th, it will go to the Dobbs Ferry library for the summer. The museum tells the story of the role OHRH played in the Revolution and then the story of the Odell family in the 19th century. If you have a venue with locked display cases and would like to have the exhibit come to your town, get in touch.

In September we welcomed Marc Cheshire, Kathy Evers and Robert Hermann to our Board of Directors. Marc had redesigned our website earlier in the year and now maintains it as a Board member. Kathy is always in charge of refreshments and brings valuable financial experience to our work, and Bob is now our advisor on all things legal.

To close out the year, our Board was treated to a private tour of Boscobel in Garrison, NY. We are sister museums because States Dyckman, who built Boscobel, was the nephew of Margaret Dyckman Odell, the mother of our Colonel John Odell. We're developing the shared genealogy and look forward to more shared events.

While the shoring work progressed at the house, Kathy Craigwell-Varda, an expert in early American antique collections, came to Westy's and taught us how to catalogue and identify all we had rescued, thanks to a grant in 2020 from the Greater Hudson Heritage Network.

Cataloguing is an important part of museum operations because it allows us to know what physical objects we have to tell the stories and how we will be able to create displays. We hope to complete the inventory in the next years so we can plan exciting and innovative exhibits for the museum.

ACQUISITIONS

Ketchum Collection

Bill Ketchum was one of the foremost authorities on American Colonial era antiques and artifacts. Upon his death in early 2021, the Friends learned that he bequeathed a beautiful assortment of antiques, from furniture to toys, for display in the museum. All those items have now been inventoried and safely stored at Westy's except for a selection that is now part of our travelling exhibit. We are very grateful to Bill and his wife, Erica Stoller, for entrusting us with these treasures.

Howard Collection

Ed and Alice Howard, longtime residents of Scarsdale, allowed us to choose many antiques from their family's collections, from a handmade cradle to clay marbles. They are now at Westy's waiting to go on display.

Items from others are coming to us too including a pistol similar to the ones carried by French officers during the Revolution. We are so pleased to see this



OHRH President Susan Seal receives a proclamation from County Legislator Mary Jane Shimsky.

community support.

All of the artifacts are part of the many stories OHRH holds. And speaking of stories, the first Odell article was published on our newly redesigned website in February, 2021. Edna Odell, World War I Red Cross nurse was also the cover article for the summer issue of the *The Westchester Historian*, published by the Westchester County Historical Society.

Edna wrote dozens of letters during her short life and most of them were found in the boxes of documents we moved from the shipping containers to the WCHS archives in late 2020. Also in the container was her uniform, which is now restored thanks to Nuway Cleaner in White Plains and waiting to go on display. In the house we found some of her luggage and trunks. There were dozens of trunks in the house and some of them still have treasures inside. The Odells really did not throw anything out, which is a good thing as far as historians are concerned. Being the caretakers of the artifacts is an honor because it is a unique motherlode of American history.

Board members and volunteers continue to research

more stories, in particular the relationship between the Odell Farm and slavery, the Native Americans living near the Farm and of course, the events of 1781. We would love more history buffs to join us!

OUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2021, the Friends received \$69,243 in revenue from donations and grants. Our expenses were \$19,840 resulting in a net gain of \$49,403 for the year. By the end of 2021 the organization had assets of \$101,230, an increase of 85% versus 2020. Our planned asset allocation for 2022 will use some of our assets for several projects, many already underway: the archeology dig, the cultural landscape plan, our research projects on slavery, Native Americans and the Colonial origins of the farm, and the study of the history of the Odell family. The documents at WCHS are almost completely catalogued and ready to be used for scholarly research.

In 2022, in addition to continuing to work with the Town to achieve the physical restoration of the house, the Friends are exploring how to plan a modern museum. Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters presents a unique opportunity for us—creating a brand-new place to tell the story of our nation's history. It needs to be engaging for the children of today, an exciting place to come, to learn, to share ideas and to have fun. Heritage tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of our economy and Greenburgh and Westchester County will have a much larger share in that if we plan properly.

Just as you were all so generous and made it possible for our plans to move so far forward in 2021, our donor campaign for 2022 includes a central request to hire a museum consultant to help create an exciting 21st century museum. Please support us either through our website [here](#), or by check to the address below. All donations are fully tax deductible.

Donate by Check

Make your check payable to Friends of OHRH and mail it to:

OHRH, c/o Seal
14 Rochambeau Drive, Hartsdale, NY 10530

Thank you for your support!

Conditions Inside the House

Clockwise from top left: 1. Books, documents, tools, household objects and furniture littered the house when we began the process of cleaning it out so restoration work could begin. 2. This quilt was rolled into a ball on a couch, under a leak in the roof. 3. The first floor of the 1855 section, showing a steel beam in the upper left that had to be installed as part of the process to shore up the foundation.



Clockwise from top left: 1. The fireplace in Rochambeau Room, when the process of cleaning out the house was just beginning. 2. Wooden bracing in the Rochambeau Room, after the house had been cleaned out. 3. The exterior, showing the covers installed over the all windows and the thick plastic material covering the roof. When this work was completed the house was once again protected from the weather and small animals, after decades of neglect.



DONORS TO FRIENDS OF OHRH BY AMOUNT FOR 2021

\$25,000 +

Private Family Foundation

\$5,000-\$24,999

Scarsdale Historical Society
Hudson River Valley National
Heritage Area

\$1,000-\$5,000

Neil Boemio
Carolyn Coella
Marthe & Bob Czufin
Linda & Bill Doescher
Bonnie & John Gould
Tom & Laura Hay
Christina Ho
Diana Juettner
Connie Kehoe
Cathy Ludden & Eric Rothenberg
Daniel Martin
Sandy & Bill Morrissey
Vaneska Pasqua & Norberto Zaiet, Jr.
Sharon & Frank Robinson
Susan & David Seal
Westchester County Legislature

\$500-\$999

Judy & Jim Boyle
Heather & John Breslin
Edna & Larry Gabler
John Landry-Odell
Kyriakos Sarantakos
Kate & Bill Stempel
Margaret & Roger Vogt

\$250-\$499

Ruba Annabi
Adelaide Boemio
Patty & Bob Dohrenwend
Kay & Ed Harrison
Katie & Ken Hite
Ann Kilbourne
Daniel Polsky
Anoop Rai
Paul Saenger
Diane Ueberle

\$100-\$249

Adriene & Joel Belmont
Patricia Bonami
Duane Booth
Ann Buscaglia
Thierry Chaunu
DAR of Westchester
Julie Diddell
Mickie & Peter Eschweiler
Kathy Evers
Helene & Bernard Fishman
Mary Ingreselli
Peter Keil
Elaine Leuner
Morgan Lucas
Michael Marino
Lawrence May
Robert Mindel
Amy Monahan
Gail Odell
John Odell
Joseph Schoder
Christopher Tompkins
Sharon Tomback
Marian & Gray Williams
Charlotte Young
Robert Zarookian

Under \$100

Ann Alexander
Susan & Anthony Bouchard
Susan Bartolone
Jack Billig
Charles Carroll
Marcia Case
Yezenia Centeno
Stephen DeVillo
Alison Donald
James Donovan
Lorrie & Robert Fetonti
Joanne Fichtel
Richard Forliano
David Greene
Mary Gries
Andrew Grossman
Roger Jewell

Ronald Jost
Michelle Kay
Anne King
Ellen Klein
Jean LaChaud
Marilyn Littman
Peter Marcus
Andrea Mazziotto
Anna Moschella
Raheem Murad
Roy Odell
Cathy Patapis
Kristin Pradlik
Carolyn Ripp
Howard Scherry
Geraldo Sciascia
George Souls
Jennie Steinhagen
Robina Streja
Christine & Richard Sternberg
Carolyn Taylor
Terry Tousey
Vito Valentinetti
Patty & Mike Vaughn
Dan Weinfeld
Susan Werbe
Arlene & Arnold Winer
Jennifer Wurtzburger

