



Swansea Historical Society Newsletter

The Preservationist

Founded

1941

SWANSEA, MASSACHUSETTS

swanseahistoricalsociety.org

SPRING 2025

Swansea's Fishing Industries

Around the time of the War of 1812, the importing of whale oil diminished greatly. This is when the fishing industry started to grow in Swansea.

The fishing industry became a more attractive and lucrative business for many Swansea farmers. Off the shores of Swansea were shell fish and an abundance of the menhaden fish. The oil from the menhaden fish took the place of whale oil.

There became a demand for dressed and salted menhaden fish that was shipped to the Southern markets and the West Indies.

Job Gardner was one of the Swansea farmers that took the chance and developed a seven to eight vessel fishing business.

Between 1880 and 1890 fish fertilizers was a byproduct of the menhaden fish. Later in the 1800s menhaden fish became important to Swansea's economy.

The William J. Brightman Co. on the Cole's River in Touisset became a scientific manufacturer of fertilizer and companies in Tiverton and Fall River also developed fertilizers for different soils to be used at different times of the year.

Swansea Historical Society's 85th Anniversary

In 2026, the Swansea Historical Society will celebrate its 85th anniversary! The Society was established on January 23, 1941, by Marion Rielly.

Stay tuned for more information on an event planned to celebrate our 85th anniversary!

Visit our website to view a still photo presentation on the history of the Swansea Historical Society. The slide show was created in 2021 for the 80th anniversary celebration.

swanseahistoricalsociety.org/shs_history.html

Welcome

We would like to welcome our new members to the SHS! We look forward to working with you in the future.

Swansea Historical Society Membership Drive



The Swansea Historical Society is currently running a membership drive.

We need your help to preserve, protect and promote Swansea history. You can also help us with the maintenance and repair costs to save the Luther Store for future generations.

Luther Store Cauldron

The Luther Store has housed many different items over the years. One of these items was a cauldron. This cauldron was loaned to the Swansea Historical Society by Mrs. Edward S. Parks.

It was used on the Richmond Gardner farm to boil fish parts which was used to fertilize his crops.

In the 1800's cauldrons came in many different sizes for different uses. The uses ranged from cooking to rendering whale blubber for whale oil. Sizes ranged from 3 gallons to 200 gallons.

The cauldrons used on whaling ships were 140 to 200 gallon sizes.

These cauldrons were made to be placed in a try works. A try works was a brick structure fastened to the deck of whaling vessels to house the cauldrons to render oil from whale blubber.



Cauldron on a fishing boat for size perspective



SHS Cauldron in the Luther Store

You are invited...



Please visit our website at swanseahistoricalsociety.org and click on the "Store" link to see our available items for purchase – mugs, wind spinners, rope bowls and many other items!

Monetary Donations are always accepted! Donations will be used for restoration and repairs only, not for operating funds.

Upcoming Events

July 19th, 2025 6 p.m.

History Through Music

Jon Waterman

Swansea Community Center

August 9th, 2025 1 p.m.

Workshop for Fall and Thanksgiving
Wreaths & Swags

September 19th, 2025

SHS Annual Meeting **1 p.m.**

World Wars I & II Memorabilia **2 p.m.**
Swansea Community Center

October 11th, 2025

Pumpkin Patch Event

Pumpkin & Apple Pie Baking Contest

Pumpkin Decorating Contest

Call now to enter!

October 26th, 2025

Abram's Rock Walk

November 8th, 2025 1 p.m.

Workshop for Christmas Wreaths &
Swags

SHS Officers & Board

President - Carl Becker,

Vice President - Cheryl Bogle

Treasurer - Robbie Alford

Acting Secretary - Cheryl Bogle

Paul Cote

Patricia Redfearn

Karen Bowen

Diane Luther Silvia

Carol Gafford

Kathleen LeBlanc

Luther Store Update

After the first floor ceiling was taken down, structural issues were exposed. The second floor window on the east face of the building has been leaking for quite some time, causing damage to the framing beneath the window moving down to the second floor sill, joists and framing. Our contractor has taken care of the second floor framing but we now need to address the window framing and any other damage in that area.

For many years, the SHS has been calling a small room on the second floor of the Luther Store "the library." This room was JG Luther's office.

Too many heavy objects had been stored in that area which caused the support beams to severely deflect. To add support, two permanent columns have been placed in the back room of the first floor where those deflected beams are located.

We have other structural issues to address as well as the replacement of rotted joists. Most at the windows, chimney and fireplaces need to be rebuilt as well as several other issues. These will be taken care of as we can afford to. All structural and environmental issues will be taken care of before we open the store to the public.

When the store is ready to be reopened, the second floor is going to be used for storage only. No public

WW Memorabilia Talk

Following the Annual Meeting on September 19th, Brandon Travers will be speaking on World Wars I and II memorabilia.



Pumpkin Judges Needed

We will need judges this fall for our pie baking and pumpkin decoration contests. If you would like to volunteer to be a judge, please contact Cheryl Bogle at 508-496-9564 or Integracrete2@gmail.com.

Luther Store Update cont'd.

access to the 2nd floor will be allowed. We are not 100% sure how things will be laid out in the Store. We are thinking of recreating an 1800s General Store on the main floor as soon as you walk in. To the left on the main level is the addition area that will be for exhibits. The back room will store our historical documents and research materials.