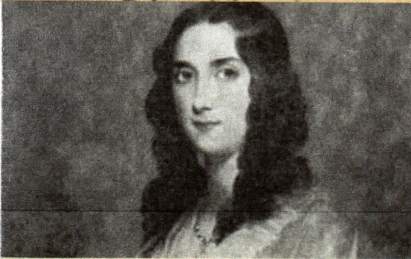


# The Elizabeth Oakes Smith Society Newsletter

**Officers:**

Timothy Scherman, President  
Rebecca Jaroff, Secretary  
Mary O. Nichols, Treasurer

**Website:**

[www.oakes-smith.org](http://www.oakes-smith.org)

**Membership and**

**Donations:** (see our links on the website)

**IN THIS ISSUE**

*Recovering Elizabeth C. Wright: Emily Van Dette's new edition of Lichen Tufts (with Laurie Lounsberry Meehan's afterward) recalls EOS's relation to the next generation of women in the outdoors.*

*Oakes Smith papers on the conference circuit this spring—with the Poe and Sedgwick Societies.*

*A Partnership with Friends of Lakeview Cemetery...and did Washington sleep at The Willows?*

*Involving Students in the Recovery of EOS: three researchers at NEIU contribute to two volumes of Elizabeth Oakes Smith: Selected Writings (Mercer Press, 2023-24).*

*Tables of Contents for Volumes 1 and 2 of The Selected Writings...*

## New scholarship on Elizabeth C. Wright Links Oakes Smith with the Next Generation of Woman Activists

On the last morning of the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Symposium this past June, **Emily VanDette** presented a paper excerpted from her forthcoming *Legacy* profile on anti-slavery and temperance advocate and feminist nature writer Elizabeth C. Wright (1826-1882). Only this month, VanDette's edition of Wright's hybrid nature treatise *Lichen Tufts: from the Alleghenies* is out from SUNY Press with a terrific afterword by Alfred University archivist **Laurie Lounsberry Meehan** (order now!), but it was VanDette's brief mention of Oakes Smith in her paper that slapped this editor in the left ear.

terms of educational reform VanDette's and Meehan's work points us to in *Thought Knows No Sex: Woman's Rights at Alfred University* (2008) by Susan Rumsey Strong.

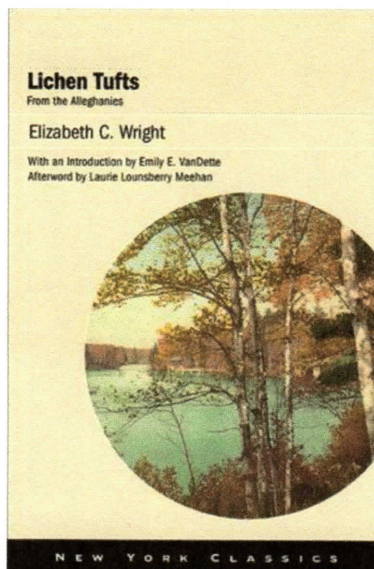
Elizabeth C. Wright was already involved in activism by 1854, attending Temperance and Anti-Slavery conventions and even lecturing on temperance in that year, so Oakes Smith's lecture may not have been ground-breaking for her individually. That said, her experience in the outdoors—or what VanDette describes as her “liberating encounter” with nature on a camping excursion led by Alfred President John Allen—is the closest cognate we've yet found to Oakes Smith's own narrative describing her experience of a ten day's journey to the lowest peak of Mt. Katahdin in 1849. That Wright also wrote and lectured on a subject close to Oakes Smith's central purpose, “The Dignity of Labor”—a title they both used—makes Wright a fascinating new connection for Oakes Smith scholars to pursue in future work.

**New Scholarship...**

### Papers link EOS to *The Linwoods* and the model of *The Poe* *Log*

Two papers delivered by President of the EOS Society, Tim Scherman, within a few weeks this spring featured new links to established texts and even methods and resources for author recovery.

Scherman's paper at the Sedgwick Society Symposium in June noted a “how did we ever miss this” link between Sedgwick's *The Linwoods* (1835) and the first of three related texts Oakes Smith wrote set in the time of the American Revolution, “The Remapo Pass: A Story of the Revolution.” Written in little more than two weeks and requested by editor Alice Neal in a



As a student at Alfred University on July 3, 1854, VanDette noted, Wright was likely present when the Ladies' Literary Society invited Elizabeth Oakes Smith as their first woman lecturer, an occasion Abigail Allen described as “an inspiration to the young women,” some of whom delivered spoken addresses at commencement the following day. While we have records and reviews of hundreds of lecture appearances by Oakes Smith from New York to Chicago in 1850s and 60s, this is the first to be discovered in a university setting, the context of which in



### Scherman papers...cont'd

prescribed format, Oakes Smith seems to have translated Sedgwick's characters and plot in a simplified version of her own, though the setting of her novel would eventually accommodate the presence and significance of Native American figures in later versions. Most of all, Scherman's paper, which he admitted likely "had January 6 too much in mind," attempted to account for Oakes Smith's more prominent inclusion of the violent marauding gangs known as the Cowboys than can be found only briefly in Sedgwick's text.

In late May, Scherman presented "What's in a Log?" at one of two Poe Studies Association panels at the ALA conference in Chicago, this one reflecting first on the significance of Jackson and Thomas's documentary volume of 1979, *The Poe Log*, in the development of Poe biography, and how a similar resource documenting the days of Oakes Smith's life, along with the growing EOS website, and the forthcoming *Elizabeth Oakes Smith: Selected Works* (2023-24), might encourage new scholarly work. While the EOS Log exists in embryonic form on a private server, our goal is to open the project of data gathering to students and professional scholars on a moderated public wiki in future years.



Lynn Davis and Arlene Capobianco joined Tim Scherman and Mary Oakesmith Nichols to discuss plans for the gravesite earlier this spring

### Executive Board sets Budget for 2022-23

At the conclusion of our fiscal year, the EOS Society's bank balance stands at over \$1900.

With projected/committed donations at \$1500 in the coming months, the Society is well positioned to continue our Travel Fellowship program for 2023, support Friends of Lakeview Cemetery, and plan for the renovation of the gravesite in Patchogue.

The Call for Applications for our Travel Fellowship will be distributed in August, with a deadline of November 1.

## EOS Society Joins Friends of Lakeview Cemetery

As discussed at last year's Executive Committee meeting, as well as this year's on May 29, then announced at our Annual meeting of June 25, the Elizabeth Oakes Smith Society is now an official corporate sponsor of the Friends of Lakeview Cemetery, where Oakes Smith and her husband Seba Smith are buried.

Or where they were reburied.

Many (this editor among them) had assumed that the two were buried in a family plot in what was basically the backyard of the house occupied by the family from 1860 to 1874, called "The Willows." Confusion results from the fact that at least Seba Smith was originally buried in a cemetery in the north of town called "The Willow" cemetery owned by then resident Austin Roe. Bodies in that cemetery were moved to the "new" Willow cemetery later in the century, and the bodies of Oakes Smith and her husband were eventually laid to rest in Lakeview in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Research done by Friends leader **Lynn Davis** documents how both bodies were originally buried elsewhere before being moved to Lakeview, which is really a group of cemeteries off what is today Main Street in Patchogue, Long Island.

Davis has also spent years attempting to verify whether or not "the Willows" (the Oakes Smith home) was originally Hart's Hotel, where George Washington stopped for bread and oysters on his tour of Long Island in 1790. Since it was around the time the couple purchased the property that Oakes Smith wrote a three-article feature on Washington for *Emerson's United States Magazine*, it would make some sense that the property's past held some significance in their choice of residence in 1859.

Plans for our partnership with Lakeview include the repair and cleaning of the two gravestones as well as the installation (with approval of the cemetery) of hardscape with a bench and a plaque or historical marker explaining the significance of both the two writers and the home in which they lived, the location of which is only thirty yards closer to Main Street.

## Calls for Papers

### The American Literature Association Conference, May 25-28 2023, Boston

Panel organizers are interested in abstracts for papers of 15-20 minutes on any literary or historical subject clearly related to Oakes Smith studies. Papers that situate Oakes Smith's work in relation to other major writers and movements of the period are preferred. Abstracts of 150-200 words should be sent to Rebecca Jaroff at [rjaroff@ursinus.edu](mailto:rjaroff@ursinus.edu) by December 1, 2022.



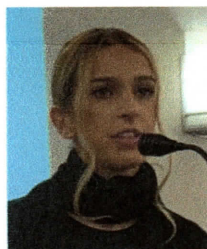
## Students contribute significantly to Oakes Smith *Selected Works* project

Three new students at NEIU have been recruited to join the effort to bring Oakes Smith's work to the broader public in book form.

**Mark Behringer**, former journalist at the *Chicago Tribune* now pursuing an English degree, along with graduate students **Sylwia Jurkowski** and **Rebecca Gawo**, have all been working with Tim Scherman on specific projects related to *Elizabeth Oakes Smith: Selected Works*, forthcoming from Mercer Press.



Behringer



Gawo

All of them have gained experience with basic editing, annotation, and proofreading. Gawo was responsible for compiling variations from Oakes Smith's original publication of her breakout work, "The Sinless Child" (1842) as the work was revised for Keese's edition in 1843 and

Griswold's in 1845. Working ahead to volume 2, Behringer is the first to compile variations from the Oakes Smith's original publication of *Woman and Her Needs* as a series of articles for the *New York Tribune* as it was revised in book form for Fowler and Wells in 1851. After providing accurate typescripts and draft annotations for several works included in volume 1, Jurkowski leaned into marketing, identifying and contacting dozens of bookstores, libraries and other organizations for advance publicity.



Jurkowski

## Students Looking for an Archival Project?

Professors interested in introducing their students to archival study are invited to work with our large collection of images collected from the two major collections of EOS's work at the New York Public Library and the University of Virginia.

Beyond the few dozen letters between Oakes Smith and her husband to be published in Volume One of the *Selected Works*, hundreds of letters to and from Elizabeth Oakes Smith remain to be transcribed and annotated, along with several lectures, two plays, and a mass of editorial.

Collective work on the EOS Log will begin in 2023.

For ideas and texts to work with, contact Tim Scherman at [t-scherman@neiu.edu](mailto:t-scherman@neiu.edu).

## Elizabeth Oakes Smith: Selected Works to appear from Mercer Press (2023-24)

### VOLUME ONE

Editor's Note  
Chronology  
General Introduction  
Introduction to Volume 1: Emergence and Fame

### LETTERS:

- A. Elizabeth Oakes Smith and Seba Smith 1833
- B. Elizabeth Oakes Smith to Seba Smith 1836-1837

POETRY: "The Sinless Child"

FICTION: "The Black Fortune-Teller"  
"The Witch of Endor"  
"How To Tell a Story"  
"Coming to Get Married"  
"The Defeated Life"  
"Beauty, Vanity and Marble Mantles"

MEMOIR: A Pilgrimage to Katahdin and related correspondence

### VOLUME TWO

Editor's Note  
Chronology  
General Introduction  
Introduction to Volume 2: Feminist Journalism and Public Activism

### ESSAYS

*Woman and Her Needs* (1851)  
*Hints on Dress and Beauty* (1852)

### LECTURES

"The Dignity of Labor" (1852)  
Address to the Second National Woman's Rights Convention (1852)

### FEMINIST EDITORIAL and *The Egeria*

The *Egeria*: prospectus and correspondence (1851-54)

(Details for Volume Three will be included in our next newsletter.)