

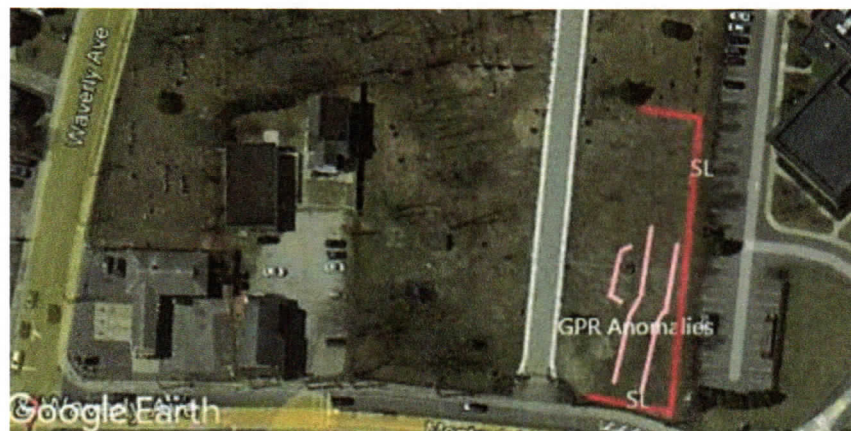


Attempts to trace the history of Oakes Smith's Long Island home involve Ground-Penetrating Radar

Material research...

The machines rolled in on the morning of October 3, 2022, hired through a partnership between the Greater Patchogue Historical Society and the Friends of Lakeview Cemetery. Friends leader Arlene Capobianco was on-site, with our historian Lynn Davis reporting: "everyone was pretty excited! Give or take a few feet here or there, it's right where it was described to be, about 50 yds from [Oakes Smith's] headstone, which would have been northwest of the house."

Oakes Smith and her husband moved to Patchogue in 1859 as the war approached and Seba Smith began to retire from public life. They purchased a large home on Fulton Street (now Main) in what is now the property of Lakeview Cemetery from a local lawyer, Brewster Woodhull. They renamed the home "The Willows." After her husband's death, Oakes Smith joined her eldest son Appleton in North Carolina in 1874, returning to rent in Patchogue during the summer months. By 1881 the former mansion, which featured a billiard room and aviary, was housing itinerant railroad workers, and on May 12 of that year it burned to the ground. (Photo of the house in this later period on page 2)...



Pink lines indicate Premier findings

With the land vacant for so long, Oakes Smith scholars might be pleased to see the location of the home identified, but others in Patchogue are more interested in its relation to George Washington's tour of Long Island in 1790. The General passed only one evening in town, enjoying Blue Point oysters at Hart's Tavern, which stood either very near or on the spot of Woodhull's and Oakes Smith's future home. Given Oakes Smith's (and the nation's) continued dedication to the memory of George Washington, it makes sense that the family might have chosen a property with such a storied past.

Technicians at Premier Private Locating services, which conducted the geophysical search, reported and flagged the location of "anomalies" indicating the contours of what is likely a brick foundation that matches the historical survey of the property. Lynn Davis is convinced the evidence compiled—her review of property records, nineteenth and early twentieth century newspaper reports, and material remains now being unearthed—will lead officials to

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IN THIS ISSUE

Elizabeth Oakes Smith: Selected Writings, Volume I: Emergence and Fame is at the printer's and soon available to order, from Mercer Press.

Two (new) Calls for Papers circulating for the ALA conference in Boston, May 25-28, 2023.

Friends of Lakeview Cemetery conduct radar examination to locate site of Oakes Smith's home in the 1850s, "The Willows"

Applications now Accepted for Oakes Smith travel fellowship (due date: March 31, 2023)



Radar Scan...cont'd

reposition the historical marker commemorating the site of Washington's visit—now some hundred yards from the survey site—to the corner of the property where “the Willows” stood.

Construction and installation of a small hardscape and a bench for those visiting the gravesites of Oakes Smith and her husband now await the spring months. A plaque on the bench will direct the sitter to a website with information on the careers of Oakes Smith and her husband, along with an updated history of their former home.

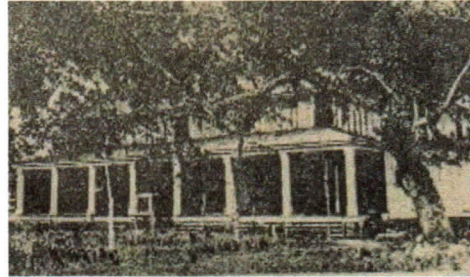


Image of “The Willows,” 1870s

Elizabeth Oakes Smith: Selected Writings, Volume 1—Emergence and Fame, available for purchase in the New Year

This first volume in a series of three from Mercer Press brings together texts and contexts from the first two decades of Oakes Smith's writing career, from her earliest “apprenticeship” as author and editor working for her husband's early journals to her emergence as a literary figure heading lists of “our contributors” in journal advertisements across the national media in the 1840s.

While scholars of American women's writing may be familiar with Oakes Smith's long poem “The Sinless Child,” that work is presented here in a form that documents key revisions from its original publication in *The Southern Literary Messenger* in 1842 through two revised versions collected in volumes of Oakes Smith's poetry published later in the 1840s.

Many selections may be new to most, from “The Black Fortune Teller,” Oakes Smith's first published story and the only one to feature an African American female protagonist, to “How to Tell a Story,” which provides readers a sense of her Down East humor, to “Beauty, Vanity, and Marble Mantels,” which documents a woman's passing as a male minister. The Maine Memory Network has made available a typescript of Oakes Smith's newspaper columns documenting her climb of Mt. Katahdin in 1849, but here, as elsewhere in the volume, readers are provided with historical and biographical contexts to bring new significance to this work.

Early letters between Oakes Smith and her husband during the 1830s are transcribed from manuscripts from the Albert and Shirley Small collection at the University of Virginia and published here for the first time, offering new primary evidence for scholars discussing the origin of Oakes Smith's complex views on marriage and the circumstances attending her move to New York City and the launch of her long career.

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH
Emergence and Fame

Elizabeth Oakes Smith
Selected Writings + Volume 1
Emergence and Fame, 1831-1843

Edited by Timothy H. Scherman

SANDRA TOMC
professor of English, University of British Columbia, and author of *Industry and the Creative Mind: The Literary Worker in American Literature and Entertainment, 1790-1860*

“Socketed with Elizabeth Oakes Smith's letters, poems, sketches, and short stories, most of which are brought together for the first time, this volume traces her emergence as a professional writer. Particularly revelatory and touching are the letters exchanged between Oakes Smith and her husband, author Seth Smith, during their first separation in a decade of marriage that provide a unique insight into the day-to-day details of an editorial and domestic partnership. Deeply researched and well-annotated, these volumes will be of great interest to both scholars and students.”

REBECCA JAROFF
associate professor of English, UConn College

“A series on the writings of Elizabeth Oakes Smith is long overdue. Timothy Scherman offers a thoughtfully curated collection in three volumes that trace the life and times of this remarkable woman, detailing her wide-ranging contributions to nineteenth-century American culture, and her struggle to find her own voice. This series, edited with the expertise developed over three decades of research, will answer as many questions about Oakes Smith's life and work as it raises, enticing scholars and students to delve deeper into this complex, multi-talented, and eminent figure's broad range of texts.”

Timothy H. Scherman is associate professor and chair of English and Linguistics at Northeastern Illinois University. A graduate of Dartmouth College and Duke University, Scherman's career-long recovery of the life and work of Elizabeth Oakes Smith began in 1981 and continues to the present day. He is founder and president of The Elizabeth Oakes Smith Society and editor of the most comprehensive and current selection of her work at www.oakes-smith.org.

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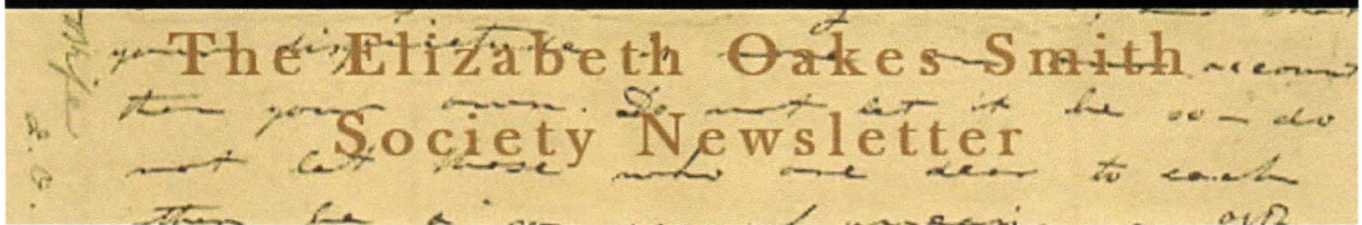
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In Elizabeth Oakes Smith, *Selected Writings*, Timothy H. Scherman re-introduces modern readers to a nineteenth-century woman writer and public activist whose disappearance from literary history would seem impossible in light of the volume of her published writing, and the visceral responses she elicited from readers in her own day. (Including samples of her work in every genre—personal letters, short fiction, novels, lectures, editorial, sermon excerpts from several months and one of her plays—Scherman captures the full creative range of one of the earliest woman professionals in the literary field in three carefully arranged volumes. Scherman's new introduction, substantial in his editor's introduction, considers the difference between this series and others like it in the recent recovery of women writers of Oakes Smith's era. While spotlighting the writer's life and work in the broad contexts of U.S. and trans-Atlantic literary culture and suggesting thematic and political relations among Oakes Smith's variety of writings, these volumes advertise a still broadly open field of investigation, research, and basic information that might lead to a more understanding of Oakes Smith's success and later-day despite some gaps that would be productive studies in the intricate linkages with access to a growing series of electronic archives of her writings, now including an expanded Oakes Smith website and DVD Log.



Calls for Papers, American Literature Association Conference—Boston, May 25-28, 2023

Putting Their Heads Together—Elizabeth Oakes Smith and Margaret Fuller



It might be surprising for many current scholars to read Harriet Taylor Mill's declaration in the April 1852 issue of *The Westminster Review*

(London) that "The mantle of Margaret Fuller seems to have fallen on the shoulders of Mrs. E. Oakes Smith... lady-contributor to the *New York Tribune*."

While in her book *Woman Thinking* (2004), Tiffany Wayne began to trace the many ways Oakes Smith carried forward Fuller's early work as a public intellectual, myriad relations between these two women still await discussion and debate.

Papers for a panel at the ALA conference in Boston, May 25-28, 2023 are invited on any aspect of their personal, professional or intellectual relationships, including but not limited to

- Interest/engagement with "spiritualist" discourse
- relations with Horace Greeley and the *Tribune*
- excursions "West"—to Chicago and its environs
- women and the outdoors (EOS's "Katahdin," Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes* and others)
- reception by/resistance to Poe and other male critics
- representation of/reflections on Native Americans and US Policy concerning them
- feminist styles of presentation/public discourse
- marriage/sex (as institution for debate or as lived experience)
- New York and the social scene
- Women as carceral subjects

Paper abstracts of about 250 words should be emailed to t-scherman@neu.edu by **January 20, 2023**.



Antebellum Women in Woods

Soon after Elizabeth Oakes Smith returned from her hike through the Maine wilderness on her way to Mt. Katahdin in 1849, she wrote to poet Lydia Sigourney, "the experience has done me good, not physically merely, but in my very soul." In fact, given this and several other letters she wrote in this period, scholars now surveying Oakes Smith's life and work cannot help tracing the impetus for the shift in her career at this moment—from *belle-lettres* in the 1840s to public activism in the 1850s—to this experience of ten days' physical exertion outdoors.

Writing of men, Thoreau wrote, "we are attracted by wilderness, the Otherness of it, the sense it is something inevitably outside of us."

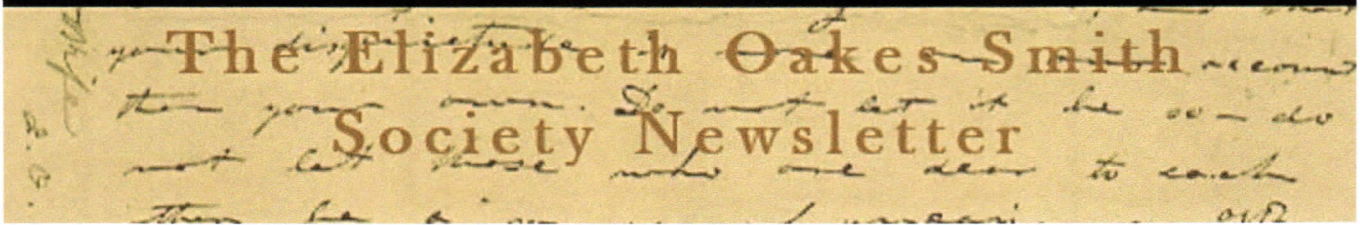
Do women writing of their experiences outdoors in the antebellum period agree?

Perhaps Mary Rowlandson would (if indeed it is not just the Puritan patriarchs we hear in her *Narrative of Captivity*)—but what do we find in the representations of later writers—Child's Mary Conant, Fern's Ruth Hall, the ironic narrator of Kirkland's *A New Home*, or Fuller, on the Illinois prairie? For Jacobs or Wilson, "the land" is a place of alienated labor and exposure, but *the woods* may promise safety, or freedom.

As Emily Van Dette has recently reminded us, by 1860, women like Elizabeth C. Wright in *Lichen Tufts* had begun framing a feminist view to counter the abstractions of a male transcendentalist concept of nature, but even before Wright's fully developed theory of feminist environmentalism, can a close reading of women's writing about the outdoors in the decades preceding that work provide testimony toward an alternative view?

Paper abstracts of about 250 words should be emailed to rjaroff@ursinus.edu by **January 20, 2023**.





Call for Proposals: The Oakes Smith/Maine Women Writers Research Grant (\$1500)—deadline March 31, 2023

The Oakes Smith Society is proud to announce its 2023 grant for travel and research in pursuit of projects bearing on the life and career of Elizabeth Oakes Smith—including relations between Oakes Smith and other writers and figures of her generation.

Once again, scholars are invited to apply for a minimum of four days' study, with access to and support from the Maine Women Writers Collection, at the Maine Historical Society Library, and at the Portland Public Library, with \$1500 of support for travel and accommodation.

Current recipients of the MWWC Research Support Grant from the University of New England remain eligible to apply for this grant, and are encouraged to apply.

While the Society recognizes many possibilities for focuses of study, proposals involving the study of Oakes Smith's life and early writing career in the state of Maine (beyond details found in her late manuscript autobiography) will be given priority.

Current MA students or students bound for doctoral study with some background in the history of Maine Women Writers are especially invited to apply.

Proposals of 500 word or fewer should be sent to Becky Jaroff at rjaroff@ursinus.edu by March 31, 2023.

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.