

# The Elizabeth Oakes Smith Society Newsletter



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

## Website:

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

## Membership and Donations:

email: [treasurer@oakes-smith.org](mailto:treasurer@oakes-smith.org)

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*Oakes Smith Panel at ALA conference scheduled for Friday July 9, 2pm*

*Oakes Smith and other women poets revise our view of Poe in scholar' forthcoming publication.*

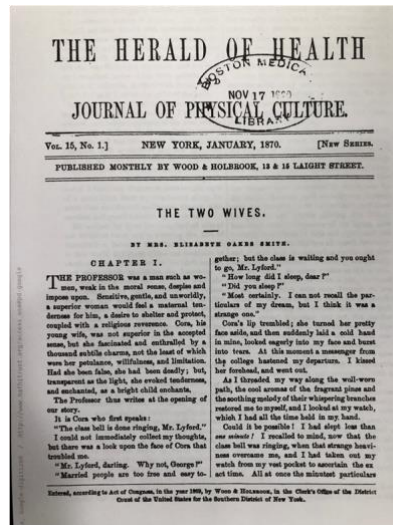
*Society dedicates funds to local Patchogue, L.I. group for preservation of EOS gravesite*

"Ideas do not go backward, but sometimes it is well to recover a neglected thread."

*The Queen of Tramps*

## A Rare Find: Student recovers Oakes Smith's last published novel

During an upper-division Oakes Smith seminar this spring, Northeastern Illinois University senior [Christina Dunford](#) corrected an important error on the Oakes Smith website—ultimately revealing Oakes Smith's "The Two Wives" from *The Herald of Health* January 1870, then listed under WORKS: Stories and Sketches, as actually Oakes Smith's last published novel.



At least three factors seem to have contributed to the oversight: 1) While the work published in the January issue of the *Herald of Health* is broken into four "chapters," this was a common structure for many of EOS's short stories; indeed, the last chapter of what ended up to be the first installment of a novel does "land" like the end of a short story. 2) No scholar has ever listed "The Two Wives" as one of Oakes Smith's novels (alongside only seven others). Mary Alice Wyman was the only scholar (in 1924) to mention Oakes Smith writing for *The Herald of Health* later in life, but this work does not appear in her bibliography or any subsequent bibliography. 3) While serialization was common practice, and Oakes Smith had published both an early version of her novel

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## Resources for scholars...

## Renewed Call for Proposals— The Oakes Smith/Maine Women Writers Research Grant (\$1500)

With COVID conditions putting a damper on applications this spring (not limited to travel restrictions—come on, it was a tough time to think about anything like a fellowship!), the Society is renewing the call for scholars to apply for the Oakes Smith/Maine Women Writers Fellowship for December 2021 or May 2022.

Scholars are invited to apply for a minimum four-day study, with access to and support from staff at the Maine Women Writers Collection, at the Maine Historical Society Library and at the Portland Public Library, with \$1500 support for travel and accommodations.

Future recipients of the [MWWC Research Support Grant](#) from the University of New England remain eligible to apply for this Grant.

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, going beyond the details offered in her manuscript autobiography, will be preferred.

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

If conditions prevent arrangements for this year's recipient to complete work during the calendar year, there will be two recipients for 2022.

## Proposals of 500 words or fewer should be sent to Becky Jaroff

[\(r-jaroff@ursinus.edu\)](mailto:r-jaroff@ursinus.edu)

by September 15, 2021.

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## A Rare Find...cont'd

*The Bald Eagle* and one or two short stories in two successive issues of a journal, none of her other novels appeared serially.

Without the “experience” of Oakes Smith’s usual practice to mislead her, however (and the assignment of a painstaking search for unrecovered texts before her), Christina had no particular expectations to shape her search through *The Herald of Health* volume 15. Indeed, she went on reading the journal, and found every issue of the year began with a new installment of Oakes Smith’s story, in the end totaling 86 pages in 12 different installments across volumes 15 and 16 of the journal.

M.A. candidate [Felicia Masas](#), currently employed as research assistant in NEIU’s department of English, has converted the whole of *The Two Wives* to a single pdf, now available to readers on the Oakes Smith website for a free download at the new “[EOS Store](#).”

Along with the manuscripts for *The Queen of Tramps* and an untitled MS novel we might call, after its heroine, *Rachel Vaughn*, this discovery marks the third previously unknown novel-length work recovered over the past decade awaiting full analysis by future scholars of Oakes Smith’s writing career.

### New Scholarship...

## EOS among the women writers revising Poe

Back on April 15, we were pleased to attend one of the Poe Studies Association’s online Forums, led by Paul Lewis, entitled “1845: From ‘The Raven to the Boston Lyceum Aftermath.’” In her contribution to the panel entitled “45 in the Afterlife of Poe,” [Sandra Tomc](#) laid out the ways Oakes Smith and other women (particularly Sarah Helen Whitman and Mary Gove Nichols) ironically described in 20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship as “Poe’s Circle” constructed not only the key counter-narrative to Griswold’s infamous character assassination of Poe but a way for current scholars to understand Poe’s figure as the product of particularly “feminine genealogies and energies.” The full article from which Tomc’s brief remarks derived, entitled “The Vast Pantheon of Speculation: Edgar Allan Poe and His Women Biographers,” is currently in circulation.

JOIN US!

Membership forms

available at

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

### Conferences....

## Oakes Smith Panel Set for ALA 2021

This year’s Society-sponsored panel at the American Literature Association conference (Boston July 8-11) will feature three papers focusing on Oakes Smith’s turn from a commercially oriented position as producer of popular literature in the 1840s to a more politically oriented career in the 1850s.

“Oakes Smith’s Feminist 50s” celebrates Oakes Smith’s remarkable occupation of various forms for her arguments—from experiments in the novel to the historical theatre, to the business of editing the political precursor to Davis and Dall’s feminist journal, *The Una*—even while it brings Oakes Smith’s voice into dialogue and debate with feminist activists in attendance at the 1852 National Women’s Rights Convention, with Cornelius Matthews and other nationalist voices of Young America, and with canonical figures such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Margaret Fuller.

Chair: Rebecca Jaroff, Ursinus College

1. “Feminist Figures for the New York Stage: Public Strategies in Oakes Smith’s plays *Old New York*, *The Roman Tribute*, and *Destiny*,” [Kyle Rogers](#), Independent Scholar, Chicago IL
2. “The Political Economy of Early Feminist Journalism: the Disappearance of *The Egeria*, and the Birth of *The Una*, January 1853,” [Timothy H. Scherman](#), Northeastern Illinois University
3. “Zenobia’s Retort: Oakes Smith’s *Bertha and Lily* (1854) as response to Hawthorne’s *Blithedale Romance* (1852),” [Heriberto Pelaez](#), Northeastern Illinois University

The panel is scheduled for Friday afternoon, July 9, at 2pm.

## Between Newsletters? Engage With Us!

[The Elizabeth Oakes Smith Page](http://www.oakes-smith.org) ([www.oakes-smith.org](http://www.oakes-smith.org)) continues to grow, providing links to original works and typescripts for classroom or scholarly use. Our [blogspace](#) is open to anyone with new and interesting comments or discoveries related to EOS!



Still on Facebook (for some reason?). Well, OK, the reason might be because we’re still there, at [EOS 1806-1893](#). Again, our space is open to the public and especially friendly (as FB is) to new images featuring places, photos and works by EOS.

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## EOS Society Commits Support to Preservation of Oakes Smith gravesite and surrounding grounds

When I first visited Oakes Smith's gravesite in Patchogue back in 1994, the mayor and town officials were nice enough to get the grass mowed there. Evidently it was over two feet high, and it took one volunteer fireman the whole afternoon to make things look presentable for this visiting scholar from the Midwest. There would be interviews, after all—photographers from the *Long Island Advance*. Someone said Channel 7 might even show up.

As I later learned, what I saw in the quickly scalped hay was nothing compared to what Ann Tarzia of the *Advance* had photographed in 1981 for an article on this local figure, whose burial plot was at that point pierced by a fifteen foot locust tree.

Oakes Smith's gravesite is just off West Main Street, in what would have been the back yard of the home she retired to with her husband in 1859 and called "The Willows." With the house long gone to decay and finally a fire, the Oakes Smith burial plot in what was private property adjacent to Lakeview Cemetery has been caught in limbo. Vandals knocked Oakes Smith's stone in two at one point (resentments die hard!). Individual volunteers have come to an occasional rescue.

Only this year have we heard of a new and organized community effort to adopt, maintain, and beautify the Lakeview Cemetery area—including the graves of Seba Smith and Elizabeth Oakes Smith. Friends of Lakeview Cemeteries, a committee formed under the Patchogue Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit, now organizes work details in spring and fall to maintain the space, not only preserving these resting places with deserved dignity but providing a space for young volunteers to learn about those buried there.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee in April it was agreed that the EOS Society would make a continuing contribution to the Friends of Lakeview Cemeteries. Beginning with a generous contribution by Treasurer of the Society and Oaksmith descendant Mary O. Nichols, we will add all dues paid by Oaksmith descendants for Oakes Smith Society membership to this worthy cause, and commit to a role of Corporate Sponsor on an annual basis.



## FRIENDS OF LAKEVIEW CEMETERIES

*committed to the restoration, improvement and preservation of the historic cemeteries located on West Main Street in Patchogue.*

## Support the Lakeview Cemeteries!

*Friends of Lakeview Cemeteries is a committee of the Greater Patchogue Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization; all donations are tax deductible.*

**Your support continues the work of improving and restoring this historic site to create a park-like setting for all of the community to enjoy and learn from.**

**FRIEND FOR A YEAR \$75**  
(\$45 for Seniors and Students)

**FRIEND FOR LIFE**

(one time contribution) **\$1,000**

**CORPORATE SPONSOR \$200/year**

*Includes your company name/logo on our website, social media and newsletter.*

Friends and Sponsors qualify for discounts at our events and can serve as subcommittee chairs.

[To make a gift on line, click here](#) and select "Cemetery" when asked.

[To pay by check, click here](#) to print the form.

To pay by credit card, call 631.207.1300