

Oxford's schoolhouse makes Most Endangered Historic Places list

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By Nicole Carter

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Furniture from the 1867 Pigeon Hill Schoolhouse will be returned to the historic building once it's moved from Route 26 to Pleasant Street and made into a living history exhibit. The Oxford Historical Society plans to restore the old school on the grounds of the Kay House Museum and create a living history exhibit. *Nicole Carter/Advertiser Democrat*

OXFORD — The Oxford Historical Society has received a major boost for its quest to save Oxford's last standing one-room schoolhouse from being demolished.

Maine Preservation has placed the 1867 Pigeon Hill Schoolhouse on its latest list of Most Endangered Historic Places.

It enables the society to apply for preservation grants to move the building four miles, from Route 26 to the Kay House Museum grounds on Pleasant Street. There, it will be restored and used as a living history exhibit for Oxford Elementary School students as well as the public.

The museum serves as the society's headquarters.

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The schoolhouse was donated to the society by the Thurlow family in June, after they placed the farmland on the real estate market this year. Some family members had attended the school until it closed in 1940.

"I am so excited," society President Patricia Larrivee said after Maine Preservation's announcement. "It's hard to believe that we have been able to do this much to save the school in such a short amount of time."

The society's first obstacle was getting approval from the Board of Selectmen to bring it to the village site owned by the town. Selectmen voiced concerns about its poor condition and appearance and the amount of work to make it safe and functional, but they gave conditional support.

The society has raised almost half of the \$25,000 needed for the move. An anonymous donor pledged \$10,000 and the society held a crafts sale in August to raise more.

Larrivee said they hope to have the move completed before the end of the year, including removing the cellar stone to use for a new foundation.

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Trees and brush surround the 1867 Pigeon Hill Schoolhouse on Route 26, the last standing one-room schoolhouse in Oxford. The Oxford Historical Society proposes to move it to the Kay House Museum property on Pleasant Street, restore it and use it as a living history museum. *Nicole Carter/Advertiser Democrat*