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OLD YORK HOLDS THIRD ANNUAL OPEN DOORS OF YORK JUNE 22–23

York, Maine—Old York Historical Society holds the fourth annual *OPEN DOORS of YORK*, a home and garden tour, on June 22 and 23, from 10am to 4pm. This year’s tour opens the doors to stately summer cottages in York Harbor, and highlights one of York’s finest early colonial houses. This is a rare opportunity for visitors to see these properties, and to enjoy exclusive views of York Harbor.

Situated around the neighborhoods of Harmon Park and Moulton Park, the tour includes access to four private homes, which range in date from the 1700s to the 2000s, as well as the historic Sayward-Wheeler House (owned by Historic New England), York Harbor Inn’s 1730 Harbor Crest Inn (formerly the Mercer Mansion), and St. George’s Episcopal Church.

“We are delighted that Open Doors will return to York Harbor this year,” says Joel Lefever, executive director of Old York Historical Society. “This hidden neighborhood, tucked between York Street and the river, is home to some beautiful houses and water views.” Settled in the 1700s, the fortunes of this neighborhood have fluctuated over the centuries. Once the site of a bustling commercial wharf, full of warehouses and shipping businesses, the area fell into decline in the early 1800s. But the landscape and unparalleled views drew wealthy visitors to the town in the 1880s, and the area was transformed into an elite summer colony. Dilapidated warehouses were replaced with marinas and summer cottages in the grandest sense.

The walking tour, which begins at historic Moulton Park on York Street, will take attendees along York Street and the York River. “The tour has a little bit of something for everyone—from historic houses, to modern family vacation homes,” says Lefever. “This blending of old and new is what makes York Harbor so distinct. It’s also what makes Open Doors stand out among home tours, allowing visitors to explore the myriad styles of houses in which people *live* in Maine.”

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TOUR

The private homes on the tour, which will be revealed on the day of the event, include colonial houses that have been heavily renovated and added on to over the years to accommodate growing families, changing tastes, and modern conveniences. These homes are filled with layers of history and family memories, and evoke a sense of York Harbor’s heyday in the 1890s and early 1900s. From their idyllic grounds and gardens, visitors can enjoy stunning views of the river—and from one perfectly-situated porch, sip a glass of cool lemonade.

In a special arrangement with Historic New England, the Sayward-Wheeler House will be included on the tour. Built between 1717 and 1718, the house was acquired by Joseph Sayward in 1720. Jonathan Sayward, a wealthy merchant who had a warehouse nearby, purchased the house from his father in 1735. He made extensive improvements, outfitting it with fine paneling and expensive furniture, and it was considered one of the most fashionable houses in York. Over time, it fell into decline, before being revived in the late 1800s by Sayward's descendants as their summer home. The house features one of the few surviving intact parlors from the 1760s.

The 1730 Harbor Crest Inn, now part of the York Harbor Inn complex, is perfect example of York's transformation from a sleepy fishing village to a popular vacation destination. The house was built in the 1730s by Richard Adams (1715–1745) and his brother John Adams (1713–1758) as a “two-over-two” structure (in other words, two rooms on the first floor and two on the second floor). It remained fairly unchanged until it was purchased by the well-known anthropologist and archaeologist, Henry C. Mercer, of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. In 1899, Mercer transformed the house into an elaborate Colonial-style cottage, moving it back from the street, and greatly expanding its footprint. It is now a luxury hotel, but many historical details are evident (including fireplace tiles that likely were added by Mercer).

The newest house on the tour, a shingle-style cottage built at the turn of the 19th century, was impeccably renovated just last year.

PICNIC LUNCH

A picnic lunch catered by York Harbor will be available at a tented venue in one of the gardens. Lunch tickets are \$15 and are available online when purchasing event tickets in advance, or at the venue. The menu will be posted closer to the event.

LOGISTICS

Parking is available at St. Christopher's Catholic Church (4 Barrell Lane), and along York Street in the vicinity of Moulton Park, and Clarks Lane.

The event is a walking tour and is not handicapped accessible. Comfortable shoes are recommended. These are old houses and the stairways and entry ways may be difficult for some to navigate.

Advance tickets for \$35 are available immediately, and may be purchased online at oldyork.org and the Museum Center ticket desk through June 20. Tickets may be purchased on the days of the tour for \$40 at a ticket tent in Moulton Park (cash, check or credit card accepted). There will be no tickets sold by phone.

Direct ticket link: <https://oldyork.givezooks.com/events/open-doors-of-york-2018>

For more information, visit oldyork.org or call 207-363-1756.

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ABOUT OLD YORK

Old York is southern Maine's largest collection of historic properties, buildings and objects. The organization maintains 16 buildings and 20 properties in York, and houses some 20,000 objects and 50,000 archival items. Special exhibitions and programs are offered throughout the year. Old York receives no federal, state, or municipal funding, relying solely on the support of the community—individuals, businesses, and foundations—to help fulfill its mission as an enriching cultural center and regional resource. All of the proceeds from this event will benefit Old York.

Old York is open to the public for its 2018 summer season Tuesday–Saturday, 10am–5pm, and Sunday, 1pm–5pm. Closed Monday. For more information please visit oldyork.org.

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