

The Oaks Historical Society Inc

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Newsletter

November 2021

Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum

CHAPTERS OF THE OAKS HOTEL

PART TWO OF AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT FROM THE RECORDS BY SUSAN DAVIS -THE OAKS HISTORICAL SOC INC.

THE OAKS SANATORIUM HOTEL

Chapter 2

In December 1897, Michael Hennessy was granted his Publican's License for The Oaks Sanatorium Hotel, so it appears that is when the name change was officially registered. In 1900 Hennessy spent a large sum of money on improvements to the hotel environs. Additional accommodation was added, along with an up-to-date bacon curing house full of well-conditioned bacon. In addition to the flower beds, fruit trees and vegetable gardens, there was a well-manicured lawn tennis court.

In July, 1898, a tennis club had formed and made good use of the tennis court at the hotel. The court was officially opened on the 12th November with many ladies and gentlemen from Picton and Camden coming to join the residents of The Oaks for the celebration. Dr Morton was the president of the tennis club. Many guests from as far away as Sydney enjoyed the afternoon tea provided by Mr and Mrs Hennessy of the hotel and then stayed on at the hotel after the celebration.

An additional attraction at the hotel was a billiard table which added to the experience of patrons staying at the hotel or day visitors. The 20 ample rooms were regularly booked for special holidays such as Easter. Some members of the community had initially opposed a hotel being built in the middle of the village. However, the professional management of the hotel, by Mr Hennessy, caused much praise, and fears were put at rest. This was confirmed in 1900 when Mr Hennessy applied for the renewal of his licence together with his billiard licence at the Camden Police Court. The police had inspected The Oaks

Sanatorium Hotel and found the premises to be highly satisfactory, including the public accommodation that was well furnished and thoroughly clean and well kept. The licence was granted.

By 1902 it wasn't just the visitors that appreciated the location of The Oaks Sanatorium Hotel. Cyclists returning from the mountains appreciated the home comforts. A drought at this time meant more farmers were selling their stock off, in Camden, and the trip from the valley was exhausting for both man and beast. Both gained refreshment and rest at The Oaks Sanatorium Hotel bore continuing the journey the next day.



The Oaks Sanatorium Hotel c.1920. Photograph from Tooth and Co.

In the spring of 1902, the hotel, on one occasion, was the scene of an inquest when a local lad had accidentally shot himself while getting through a fence while rabbit shooting. The deceased, George Gaudry, was the nephew of Alderman James Connellan, Mayor of Picton. The coroner was Mr R.H. Antill who was accompanied by a medical officer, both from Picton. They confirmed the reason for death.

A year later, in September, 1903, Michael Hennessy, transferred his license to The Oaks Sanatorium Hotel to Mr James King of The Peaks. Mr and Mrs Hennessy exchanged locations by moving to The Peaks in order to develop the hotel at that location. Mr Hennessy remained the owner of The Oaks Sanatorium Hotel. Mr King conducted business at the hotel until May 1911 when he retired. Continued on pages 3 & 4.....



President's Report

Trish Hill

Our museum as we know it is returning to a bit of normality with the relaxation recently of Government Health Orders surrounding Covid. We have just had a business meeting and looked at plans for how we might officially reopen, the issues surrounding that and ensuring our volunteers safety. We have had some interest in group bookings and these will commence this month for fully vaccinated visitors as a closed event. The December 1st date for 'freedom' generally is still not definite however when that happens we will reopen. Watch this space in the December Newsletter for details on opening .

Work is underway to rebuild both the Burraborang and Indigenous exhibitions and will take some time to work through. The larger exhibition area (pictured) is looking good and we have had a couple



ple of cabinets donated from Shop Fittings Direct (Thank you Tom) and a large new display case arrived on Monday and these cases have been located in their various positions within the exhibition space. The Indigenous exhibition will reflect and map the Gundungurra Mirragan and Gurrungatch Creation Story and Burraborang, the Dispos-

session for the War-ragamba Catchment Area. The recent donation of St Paulinus Church doors will feature in the Burraborang exhibition.

A working bee is scheduled for next Saturday 6th to clean and tidy up ready for reopening so if you have any free time, are double vaxed and

would like to help out please come along and be rewarded with a great morning tea. There is also a new volunteer roster in the pipeline to be ready for reopening ■



Acquisitions Report

Allen Seymour

Well things are picking up again. A major acquisition recently are the doors, pictured from St Paulinus Church in Burraborang. These came from the Hayter family along with some timber fretwork from the ceiling and the stone step. Two of the doors are 8 foot high and the other two are 9 foot high, and very heavy. Kevin has done a great job of cleaning up the 8' ones and painting them the colour that he and others remember. We could use a suitable handle and lock for them. They have already been included into the new display.

Colleen Haynes has given us a WW1 souvenir cloth that has



“Souvenir of Egypt” on it. It was found in something she brought at the estate sale after Minnie Roberts passed away in the 1970's. If anyone can shed any light on it, it would be appreciated. There is also a quantity of lace that came from Lily Moore. We have



received some tools from Maurice, and some of these have already been included in the blacksmith display.

The Butler journals are basically finished with all the information put onto a spread sheet. I'm just tidying up some loose ends. There are over 8,200 entries. Some names are in there 2 or even 3 times as they were recorded in more than one journal. These are accessible on our File Management directory under Mosaic Collections ■

CHAPTERS OF THE OAKS HOTEL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For the next 17 months, Mr E.A.Dobson was the proprietor of The Oaks Sanatorium Hotel. The hotel advertised (right) coaches from Camden, Picton, and Yerranderie called daily. Along with good stabling and loose boxes for horses, the hotel also now had a motor garage under lock and key. An ideal resort for tourists, travellers and country visitors! It was also admired for the fine paintings on the walls in each of the rooms.

Michael Hennessy again took over The Oaks Sanatorium Hotel in October, 1912. During 1914 the hotel went through a renovation and was refurbished to continue to attract holiday makers and tourists. As well as tennis courts, a handsome skating rink had been added to the attractions of the hotel.

Hennessy was in charge during the tough years of World War 1 when the hotel would have been a vital meeting place in the community.

Chapter 3: TOOTH AND COMPANY LIMITED COME TO THE OAKS.

Tooth and Co was the major brewer of beer in New South Wales, Australia. The company owned a large brewery on Broadway in Sydney from 1835 until 1985, known as the Kent Brewery. It was historically one of Australia's oldest companies. Delivery cards from Tooth and Co. indicate they visited The Oaks Hotel for deliveries from 1920s to 1970s. Each card covers roughly a decade. While the cards vary slightly, they all provide the same basic information. The front of the card normally has the hotel name, location, owner, licensee, a graph featuring the number of barrels or dozens of bottles of Tooth's beer supplied to the hotel, and information on the total trade with Tooth. The back of the card usually provides a photograph of the hotel and information about the building, land, amenities, nearby hotels and local industries. (Information provided by the Archives of the Australian National University.)

From 1922 the hotel is not referred to as The Oaks Sanatorium Hotel, for a short time there is a reference to the Rocklilly Hotel but from 1/7/1923 it is referred to as The Oaks Hotel.

At various times Michael Hennessy came back to the hotel as the licensee but for many years it was leased by other licensees.

THE SANATORIUM HOTEL,
THE OAKS.

Coaches from Sydney. Public Telephone at "The Oaks" Post Office (Only 2 Minutes walk from Hotel)

COACHES TO AND FROM CAMDEN, PICTON AND YERRANDERIE CALL DAILY.

Good Stabling and commodious loose Boxes. First Class Motor Garage—all of which are under lock and key.

Trains meet Trains by arrangement with one day's notice

Billiards—Alcock's Best Table.

An ideal resort for Tourists, Travellers and Country Visitors

GOOD SHOOTING AND DRIVING; PERFECT CLIMATE, AND EVERY COMFORT.

Best Brands of Wines, Spirits, Beer and Cigars Stocked.

Bed and Breakfast only if required.

E. A. DOBSON, Proprietor.



Above -This photograph is from the delivery card of the 1920s. It shows how the hotel looked in 1924. It described the hotel as being 30 yards back from the main road. The structure was brick and cement render with a tin roof. Facing the road is a Tooth and Co painted mirror attached to the wall. It was said to have a good office. The billiard room was adjacent to the rear of the hotel. There were 5 garages.

Following is a list of licensees able to be sourced:

Date	Licensee	Date	Licensee	Date	Licensee
1895	William McKee	Oct.1925	Michael Hennessy	Sept1938	Ida Croll
Jan. 1897	Michael Hennessy	Feb.1927	Daniel J Cloughessy	Jun1941	Cecil Moore
Sept. 1903	James King	Mar.1928	Frank A Waldron	Jan1949	Mary Moore
May 1911	E.A. Dobson	Aug.1928	Albert H Cooley	July 1959	Cecil Anita Smith
Oct. 1912	Michael Hennessy	Dec.1928	John C Crowe	Jan 1963	N.J. Terry
Jan. 1920	Michael Hennessy	May1929	Arthur P English	June1964	Bede Patrick Quig
Oct. 1920	Alfred Nunnery	Dec.1929	Clarence A Thompson		
July 1921	Thomas Parker	Feb. 1930	Thomas Britt		
Feb. 1922	Charlotte Boutin	July 1930	Clara Murray		
Sept.1922	William Evans	Aug.1931	Michael Hennessy		
Apr. 1923	FJP McDonald	Apr 1935	Darcy D Simpson		
July 1923	George J.Waters	Jan 1936	Robert E Jenkins		
Nov. 1923	Chris. Marsden	Jan. 1936	William J McCoy		
Feb. 1924	James Stiff	Sept.1937	William Rutherford		
Oct. 1924	James Lamb	July 1938	Chas. Nott		

Michael Hennessy remained the owner of the hotel from 1897 until his death in 1937. After that time the hotel still remained in his Estate and managed by his daughter, Mary Theresa Moore who was the executrix of his will. The beneficiaries were his children: Mary Theresa Moore (1892-1958), William Bede Hennessy (1894-1944), Edward Hennessy (1897-?), Sylvia Wheeler (1900-1986), and Eugene Hennessy (1903-1966).

At the time of his death, Michael Hennessy and his wife, Margaret, had moved into modest accommodation at Concord. His probate papers described the hotel and what it contained and business conducted with the community, which in summary was:

Michael Lawrence Hennessy, retired hotelkeeper, died in Concord, on 26 February, 1937. The executors were, May Moore of Coogee, married lady (his daughter), James Reedy of Dulwich Hill, retired gentleman, and Sydney Louis Moore, of Concord.

The value of his estate at the time of his death was 10,023 pounds, fourteen shillings and 11 pence. Mr Hennessy was still actively doing business with local traders of The Oaks, including H.J. Noakes, L. Hogan and Furner Brothers. He owned several dwellings in The Oaks and received rent from them, including a cottage at Lot 21 John Street; Butcher's shop at Lot 22 John Street; shop at Lot 20 John Street leased by H.J. Noakes; and the largest was The Oaks Hotel leased by W.J McCoy. Mr Hennessy also owned land at The Peaks (Yerranderie), Camden and Petersham.

In 1937 the Oaks Hotel consisted of downstairs accommodation of 3 parlours, a hall, dining room, bathroom, 4 bedrooms, a billiard room and a back verandah. Upstairs had 6 bedrooms, a balcony, hall, man's room and an out of order cordial machine! The furnishings were considered old and of little value.

Michael Hennessy was described as a man of simple tastes and at his death had no personal effects whatever, apart from necessary articles of clothing ■



The Hennessy family can be seen in records of the community at this time. Above shows some of Michael Hennessy's children at The Oaks Convent School in 1907.

2nd row: 8th from left – Sylvia Hennessy; 11th -Bede Hennessy.

Back row: 2nd from right – Eugene Hennessy.

This dissertation provides an overview of the history of The Oaks Hotel that has been the centre of the village of The Oaks, in New South Wales, for over 120 years. It has been physically at the centre and also, for many, the centre of the social community. Research for this overview comes from a lengthy research task involving: National Archives; Butlin Archives of the Australian National University; NSW State Archives; resources at Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum and digitised newspapers found on Trove, National Library of Australia. **TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT NEWSLETTER.**

JAMES HARDY VAUX

From privileged background to transportation in Australia, not once but three times.

Contributed by Marie Larnach

James Hardy Vaux, pictured, was born in Surrey, England in about 1782.

He was the son of Hardy Vaux, a butler and house steward employed by George Holme Sumner, a member of the British Parliament.

James' mother, Sophia Lowe, was from "good stock", as her father, Mr. James Lowe, an attorney who was clerk of papers and deputy-warden of the Fleet prison.

James Lowe did not approve of the marriage of his daughter to Hardy Vaux, and when he retired in 1785, he moved to the country and took his grandson, then aged three, to live with him.

James Hardy Vaux had the opportunities presented to him due to his grandfather's kindness and connections, with James attended boarding school, ensuring he had a good education. James' grandfather had ambitions for his grandson to follow in his footsteps, in the law profession.

Therefore, most of young James' childhood was spent either at boarding school or with his maternal grandparents in Shropshire.

At age 14, James persuaded his grandfather to apprentice him to a linen draper in Liverpool and this was the beginning of his downfall.

James enjoyed the new freedom in his life in Liverpool, and fancied himself as "a bit of a dandy", wearing smart and stylish clothes. He started staying out late at night, frequenting brothels and during the day, gambling at cock fights. He began to steal small amounts of money from the till of his employer to pay his gambling debts and maintain his rakish lifestyle. Due to his loose living, he was soon dismissed from his position.

James then returned to Shropshire, which after his liberal life in Liverpool, would have been very boring and restrictive. James pleaded with his grandfather to allow him to travel to London, to seek employment. His grandfather relented, and with a letter of introduction from his grandfather, James took up the position of a copying clerk in a legal firm. Here James worked steadily for three months, but once again, due to his frequenting brothels and repeated drunkenness, he was again out of work.

James had several other positions, including a time in the navy as a midshipman, but this didn't suit him, so he deserted his ship and returned to London.

By late 1799, James had fallen into the life of a professional thief and swindler. He was now residing in the area around Covent Garden, in the West End of London, where the night-life and theatres were more to his style. James started or-

dering clothes and other goods from tradesmen on credit, never intending to pay for them. He would then move out of his lodgings, usually late at night, to avoid paying his debts and rent. He then progressed to duping people into donating money to him as well as stealing from his employers.

In April 1800, he was arrested for defrauding his employer, but he was acquitted of this charge. In September 1800, a few months after his first arrest, James faced the Old Bailey on a charge of picking the pocket of William Dewell and stealing his handkerchief, valued at eleven pence. He was found guilty of the charge and sentenced to death. The jury found that the value of the object was not at a level to be given a death sentence, so his sentence was altered to seven years transportation.

James Hardy Vaux, arrived in NSW, for the first time, in December, 1801 on the "Minorca". Upon arrival, James was assigned to Mr. George Baker, Government Storekeeper, situated in the Hawkesbury area. James worked as a clerk for Mr. Baker for three years and due to his education and intelligence, he was then employed as a clerk, in the Colonial Secretary's Office in Sydney.

This position didn't last long, as James forged Governor Philip Gidley King's initials to a commissariat order and was then sentenced to serve a term on the road gang. For two months, he toiled away, in chains on the road gang, making new streets in Sydney. This must have been a complete shock for James, to wield a heavy tool, making roads, after his pampered life, when his only tool would have been a quill pen.

After his time on the road gang, he was sent to Castle Hill for a further ten months, to complete his sentence. He was then appointed as a clerk, in the Magistrates Office in Parramatta, assisting Rev. Samuel Marsden. It would appear James worked diligently for Rev. Marsden, as in 1807 when Governor King was returning to England, and in need of a clerk to assist him with his paperwork, Rev. Marsden suggested James would be an ideal clerk.

James' sentence was nearing its end, therefore, Governor King gave James a pardon, and he then accompanied the King family on the "Buffalo", in exchange for tutoring the King children, as well as arranging the Governor's papers and writing up his log during the voyage.

Continued on pages 6 & 7.....



JAMES HARDY VAUX Continued.....

While he was on the "Buffalo", James became insubordinate, and was dismissed from his position with Governor King. James was then compelled to enlist as a seaman for the rest of the voyage. On his return to England, James found his maternal grandparents had passed away and other family members refused to recognise a former convict.

Unable to find respectful employment, James resumed his thieving ways in London, picking pockets.

James married a local prostitute, Mary Ann Thomas, with the intention if he was ever arrested and transported again, his wife would be allowed to join him in NSW.

Taking on the appearance of a gentleman, James stole jewelry from stores and picked the pockets of theatre goers. He went undetected until November, 1808, when he narrowly escaped a further conviction when he picked a pocket and stole a snuffbox.

His luck ran out, in February 1809, when he faced the court at the Old Bailey, under the alias James Lowe, [Lowe being his mother's maiden name] on a charge of grand larceny. This time he stole a pearl and amethyst brooch, a diamond half hoop ring, a diamond ring with serpent shanks and another diamond ring from a jeweler's store in Piccadilly.

For the second time in his life, James was sentenced to death, but again escaped the gallows, when the sentence was changed to life transportation and for the second time he was on his way to NSW.

In 1810, aboard the "Indian" he reached NSW and was assigned to a settler/store keeper on the Hawkesbury, employed as a clerk. This was followed by being appointed as deputy overseer of the town gang in Sydney.

By 1811, he was sentenced to twelve months hard labour for receiving stolen property. This was then followed by time at the Newcastle penal settlement.

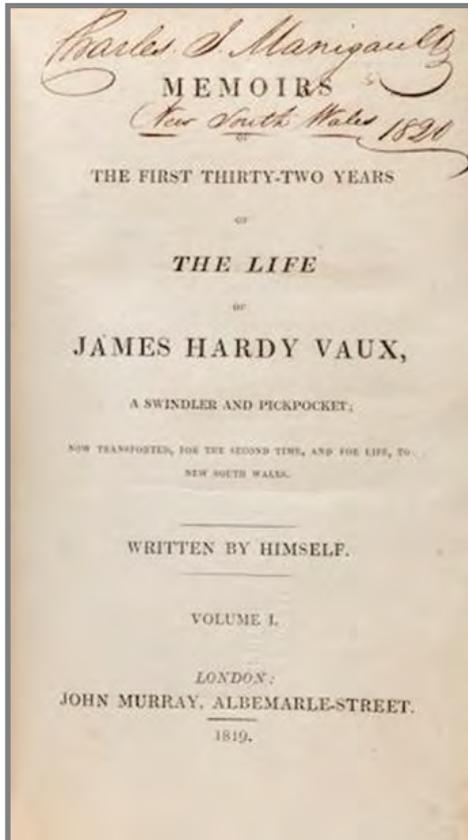
In Newcastle he was employed in wheeling coal out of the mines, a most laborious occupation. He later was put to all descriptions of work, including the duty of a watchman.

He returned to Sydney in 1814, but was flogged and returned to Newcastle when he was caught trying to escape aboard the "Earl Spencer".

During this time at Newcastle, he compiled a "slang dictionary" for the use of magistrates, to understand criminal talk, often impenetrable to outsiders, but which drew the convicts together in a secret code. The book was entitled "*A Vocabulary of the Flash Language*". The book was published for the first time in 1819 and was regarded as the first dictionary written in Australia.

After the publication of this book, he was then encouraged to write his

memoirs. The title of this book was "*Memoirs of the First Thirty-Two Years of the Life of James Hardy Vaux, a Swindler and Pickpocket, now Transported for the Second Time and Life to NSW*".



His books were published in London and James received money in the form of royalties.

The copy of James' memoirs, pictured, was sold at auction in 2012 for just under \$18,000.

His memoirs, at the time, were the first full length autobiography written in Australia. The book was republished several times, the last being in 1964.

In 1818, James married for a second time while he was in Newcastle. His initial plan to bring his first wife to Australia was possibly forgotten by him and it is not known if his first wife was still alive.

His second marriage was to an Irish convict, Frances Sharkey. She was convicted of house breaking and received a sentence of seven years transportation. Frances arrived in NSW in 1813, on the "Archduke Charles", one of the last convict vessels to Australia, that would transport both male and female convicts, on the same vessel.

A month after his marriage, James, along with Frances, returned to Sydney where he worked as a clerk.

By 1820, James seems to have finally settled down as he has now received a Conditional Pardon and is working as a clerk in the Colonial Secretary's office.

In 1824, there are reports of Frances being "drunk and abandoned" and sent to the female factory for 28 days. Again in 1824, she was found to be "drunk, riotous and disorderly" and again sent to the female factory for three months.

In 1827 at St. John's at Parramatta, James marries for the third time, to his housekeeper, Eleanor Bateman, another Irish convict. At the time of the marriage, he married under the surname Lowe. It is not clear if James' second wife, Frances, was still alive or if it was a bigamous marriage?

James' third wife, Eleanor Bateman, arrived in NSW on the "Woodman" in 1823, aged 19 when she was transported for seven years for felony. She was described in the convict records as being five foot two inches in height, a fresh complexion, black hair and grey eyes. According to the surgeon's log, Eleanor was treated for pneumonia while at sea and she fainted twice during the night from the heat of the prison.

In 1826, James was dismissed from his clerical position by Governor Darling, due to the Governor's policy of not employing convicts or ex-convicts as clerks. James then took up a position in an ironmonger's store. He stayed in the position until 1829, when he escaped the colony, therefore breaking his terms of his conditional pardon, which did not allow him to leave NSW. Later it was found that James had escaped to Ireland. What became of his wife, Eleanor, is not known?

JAMES HARDY VAUX Conclusion

In 1830 in Dublin, he was arrested, this time under the alias, James Young, on a charge of passing forged bank notes. James pleaded guilty, and once more, faced transportation, this time for seven years. He arrived in NSW, for the third time, on the "Waterloo" in 1831.

Upon arrival, he was recognised as James Hardy Vaux, and his previous life sentence was revived, and he was sent to the penal settlement at Port Macquarie, where he remained for the next six years.

In 1837, he was allowed to return to Sydney and this time was appointed as a clerk to a wine merchant. Two years later, in May 1839, he faced a serious charge of criminal assault on a young girl. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment and released in 1841.

After his release, it would appear James Hardy Vaux disappeared. No record exists after this period, nor a record of his death can be traced. One source has that James went to work "up country" as a shepherd, but this cannot be confirmed ■

VALE SONJA DEN HERTOOG

Members and friends of The Oaks Historical Society were sorry to learn of the recent death of Sonja den Hertog, Sonja was a founding member of the Society in 1979 and became a key contributor to the growth and status of the group. Although she was not Australian born, she became a dedicated supporter and promoter of Australian local history and heritage.

Sonja enrolled and completed an online Diploma in Local, Family and Applied History with the University of New England in Armidale and began her research into The Oaks. She realised that The Oaks still had a very early example of settler history in the Church of St. Matthews which her studies identified as being built in 1838/39 from local timber slabs cut by convicts employed by John Wild on his grant of Vanderville. Her first book *St. Matthews Church of England, Old Oaks, 1838-1985: Its History and Restoration* was published in 1985 after an extensive restoration by volunteers from The Oaks Historical Society. Her work has contributed to the significance and preservation of this church.

Sonja followed this with *The History of The Oaks from the records* in 1987 which is still in use today. Her research then took her into the records of the Burragarang Valley and the Silver Town of Yerranderie and she published *The*

History of the Burragarang Valley from the records and Yerranderie 1871-1995. The books have been republished several times and have become the main structure of the exhibitions at The Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum which The Oaks Historical Society built. They tell the stories about the people and events in these remote areas which are now part of the Blue Mountains World Heritage and have initiated work by many authors and artists as well as the interest of the tourism sector.

Until her retirement from the Society and relocation to USA and Germany, Sonja maintained a keen interest in the history of the area and her role at the Society's historian in the new museum has helped many people find their families. The last book she wrote was In 1997 *Walking the Valley: Sydney Speleological Society Occasional Paper No.11*.

Sonja was a significant contributor to the then, relatively recent interest in local and family history and

her work has been recognized by academics and library and archive collections nationally. The Oaks Historical Society values her work and continues to expand on her archives at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum ■

Photo: Sonja at one of her book launches



MONTHLY MEETINGS: The Oaks Historical Society Inc. holds its meetings on the first Monday of each month (except January) at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum, 43 Edward St. The Oaks starting at 7.00pm. Due to Covid restrictions and lockdown our meetings are currently suspended. Our patron is Judith Hannan. The Oaks Historical Society Inc. takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the articles, papers or reviews that appear in this newsletter. The statements made or opinions expressed are not necessarily those of The Oaks Historical Society Inc. Copies of the minutes are available.

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