

Upcoming Meeting May 1st: Please join us at 7:00pm at the Fogg House at the William Fogg Library, across the street from the John F. Hill Grange Hall. We will be guests of the Daughters of the American Revolution for their program on medical instruments used during the Revolutionary War. Refreshments will be served at 6:30 followed by the program (7:00 -7:25). Following this presentation we will hold our regular business meeting.

Historical Society News

TASTE OF ITALY

The Eliot Historical Society provided members of the community with a special evening out March 25th. Generous servings of lasagna, salad, bread, dessert and beverage were individually served restaurant style by male members while the distaff side did the cooking and baking. Diners complimented the table placements as well as the flowers in wine bottles that decorated the red and white checkered tablecloths. The recorded music of Italian singers provided a lovely background for conversations among the small gatherings at individual tables. The evening was filled with the special opportunity for the organization to come together as a team for a fund raiser as well as the camaraderie of eating the meal after the customers left.

The society thanks all who came and invites all to join them for their monthly meetings, usually the first Monday of the month at the John F. Hill Grange (see notices in the *Weekly Sentinel*). Their next fund raiser will be their big yard sale in May. – Reported by Carolyn Bogh



Ready for service! Denny Lentz, Ernie Bruneau, Skip Brown, Bob Dennis, Keith Searles, Zip Zamarchi (missing is Jack McDonough)



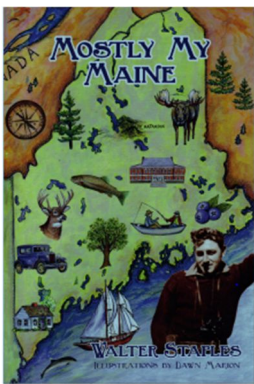
Toni Searles, Sylvia Moynahan, Polly McDonough



Our cooks - Julie Johnson and Margie Brown



Manning the ticket sales – Carolyn and Richard Bogh with guest Elinor Amee



James Staples the grandson of Victor Staples and son of Walter S. Staples stopped by for a visit and brought with him a gift for the Eliot Historical Society and for the people of Eliot. He has published his grandfather's and father's memories of living in Maine. It includes a great deal of material of their life in Eliot. **Mostly My Maine** contains the writings of Jim's father, Walter S. Staples covering their family life in Eliot, Walter's service in the Civilian Conservation Corps, his college years and hunting in the woods of Maine. Included also the paper, which for years has only been available at the town library, entitled "Memoirs of a Maine Farmer, by Victor Staples". It contains a lot of great memories of the people and places of Eliot. We are working to have him and his family members come and give a program soon! Look for more in the May Newsletter.

“ELIOT STORIES” PROJECT

The first presentations with the children of the 2nd grade Elementary School classes have begun! Eighty children met on March 9th to hear about the lives of slaves in early Kittery/Eliot with author Patricia Wall and Society member Rosanne Fisher and then again on March 16th to explore the time of the Civil War with former Elementary School teacher Nancy Cultrera.

Pat and Rosanne talked with them about the stark difference between the lives of enslaved people in early New England in the 17th and 18th centuries and the lives of those on plantations



Patricia Wall with the 2nd grade classes



during the time of the Civil War. Pat spoke about the isolation they those here in Eliot (then a part of Kittery in the colony of Massachusetts) experienced living in homes at far distances from their neighbors and with often only one or two slaves living with a family and some of the families who had slaves – Frost, Cutts, Neal, Heard and others throughout the town. Rosanne spoke about Black Will, originally the slave of Maj. Nicholas Shapleigh who bought 100 acres of land while still a before being emancipated in 1700 and about the small

“community” that developed on this property located in the 4th school district and the search for its location. She also spoke about Hetty, a servant in the Elisha Shapleigh household whose room was in the attic of the home and through the benevolence of Elisha Hetty was brought downstairs and there remain until her death at the age of 100. **Nancy Cultrera** talked to them about what it was like to be a soldier during the Civil War in the 1860s. Using letters from her grandfather to his wife during his service in the war she picked out information from the letters that the children could relate to. She told them that one of the longest marches was 180 miles, which would be marching from Eliot to Boston back to Eliot and back to Boston. Most marches were around 24 miles and that would be like marching from Eliot to So. Berwick and back to Eliot. She played marching music and the kids loved that. She talked about camping in the tents and about the type of food they had to eat. She also talked about letter writing and showed copies of the letters she had

from her great grandfather. The children were very well conversant in that era of slavery with its underground railway.

Our Society member **Jan Cerabona** has been working with the teachers on this project and searching out people to come and talk with the children who then “interview” them and gather information for their project. If you, or you know of someone who could help with upcoming topics please contact Jan at 748-0932 or email - jcerab2805@aol.com.

On March 22nd Jan met with the children to talk about a project coordinated by Rosalie Churchill and Jane Aldrich over 40 years ago. Students at the Elementary School, in 1976, drew pictures of an historical event or place in Eliot. These were then transformed by some of the ladies in the town into quilt squares and made into a quilt for our Bicentennial.

On **April 13th** they will be visiting the **John F. Hill Grange Hall** to see some displays and learn about the history and also to our **# 8 Schoolhouse** where we will share with them what the school day

was like in a one room schoolhouse. Later in the month they will also be boarding a gundalow and learning about that wonderful watercraft which transported bricks, wood, and so much more, up and down the Piscataqua. The public is welcome at all events. –

Reported by Jan Cerabona and Rosanne Fisher



YORK RIVER STUDY UPDATE

The **York River Study Committee** has hired the project team of Northeast Archeology Research Center, Inc. and Groundroot Preservation Group, LLC to conduct archaeological and architectural history surveys with the goal being to document and learn more about important prehistoric and

historic archaeological sites as well as historic buildings, landscapes, and structures.



An area of about 2,000 acres in parts of Eliot and York along the upper York River and around York Pond has been identified as likely containing important above ground and below ground historical resources. A four-day dig is being planned for June in four to eight locations identified as priorities. They are planning to involve five or six community volunteers each day.

Information gathered from the surveys will be used by the Study Committee in developing a watershed management plan and evaluating the eligibility of the York River for designation in the national Wild and Scenic River system. At the conclusion of the project the findings will be shared with the towns and their historical societies. Information about the York River Study is available on the Study Committee's website (www.YorkRiverMaine.org). If you have some information on this area to share and/or would like to be a volunteer please contact them!

Area News and Notes



March 26th was **Maple Sugar Sunday** in the State of Maine and **Warner's Way Farm's** maple sugar house in Eliot was up and boiling! Skip Warner and his helper Pete Goodwin gave us the grand tour of the facility and treated us to maple sugar candy and maple syrup-dipped donuts. Yummy! We snapped a few pictures and told them they were now *officially HISTORICAL!*



And over in East Eliot **Jay Meyer** was preparing to begin another boil at **Back Fields Farm**. A beautiful day to check out the going-ons in town!

April 7th – June 18th – The Portsmouth Historical Society presents an ongoing exhibit at Discover Portsmouth:

Four Centuries of Portsmouth Furniture with the New Hampshire Furniture Masters

Portsmouth Historical Society is preparing dual exhibitions for the spring of 2017 to celebrate and document the important history of furniture in Portsmouth during the past four centuries, and to present outstanding work by some of today's premier woodworkers. For more information on this exciting exhibit please check out their website: <http://portsmouthhistory.org/four-centuries-of-furniture-in-portsmouth/>



April 21-23rd: **The Historical Society of Early American Decoration** will be hosting and Exhibition entitled - *By the Pen: Penwork, Calligraphy,*

Flourishing, Illuminated Letters at the Doubletree Hotel, Maine Mall, South Portland. The Exhibition will open Friday, 4-10pm, Saturday, 9am-10pm and Sunday 9am-Noon. It is FREE and open to the public. It will feature antique examples of Early American Decorative arts and juried exhibition of HSEAD member's fine reproductions including furniture boxes, trays, framed paintings, and other objects of interest. It will include a



special exhibition of calligraphy and related penwork arts. Polly McDonough writes that the HSEAD is a Guild started in the 1940s by Ester Stevens Brazer. Its mission is to preserve the old patterns and methods of creating Early American decorative art works. It is made up of several chapters. The Maine Chapter to which she belongs is Stevens Plains, named after a tin smith and decorator who worked in Maine in the area of the Berwicks. They are hosting the national annual meeting this year in Portland.



Friday illustrated talk by author Noel Riley



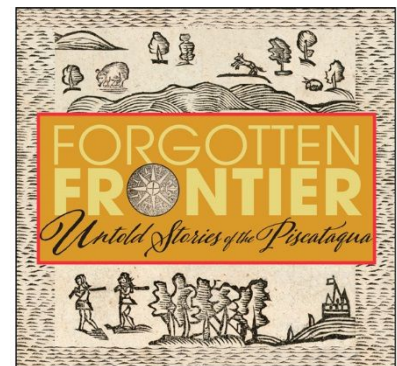
Saturday class taught by internationally known calligraphy artists
Kathy Milici and Dan Mooney
register by calling or emailing contacts listed below
For more information call 207-515-3737 or email pollytb55@gmail.com
hsead.org

April 26th: The **York River Study Committee** will be hosting a meeting from 10-11:30 am at the York Public Library Community Meeting Room - **Working Waterfront, Tidal Water Recreation, and Economic Values**. Please let Jennifer Hunter know in advance if you plan to attend any meeting or if you have any questions. 207-641-9122
JH.YorkRiver@gmail.com

April 27th - Ovens on the Edge, 1590-1640: An Experimental Archaeology of Baking 7:30 pm (Berwick Academy) OBHS program



Both English and French colonists on the Atlantic coast of North America described bread as the “staff of life” and went to considerable lengths to ensure themselves a steady supply. Food historian **Paula Marcoux** describes how early



colonists adapted their technologies, and ultimately their expectations, to local conditions. Her research combines evidence from the archeological and historical record with experimental oven building and baking trials.

April 30th - *Imagining Ichabod* - a book talk with Paula Bennett will be held at 1:00 pm at the Counting House Museum, South Berwick. OBHS program.



Author Paula Bennett will talk about her book on local history, *Imagining Ichabod: My Journey into 18th-Century America Through History, Food, and a Georgian House*.

Researching her eighteenth-century home in South Berwick inspired Paula to write *Imagining Ichabod*. She weaves historic recipes throughout the text, which includes archaeological dig discoveries from the property, along with details about its chronology and the history of the families who lived there. The book, priced at \$30, is hardcover with 60 full-color photographs and 25 adapted historic recipes and will be available at the program.



Looking East from Frye's Hill c. 1910

Well, it looks like Spring has finally arrived! These bright and fairly warm days remind me of Easter time in the days of my youth. We would go to the Sunrise Service up on the top of Frye's hill at the home of the Trefethens (next to where Margie and Skip Brown live). There we would say prayers while looking across toward Goodwin Road as the sun was coming up. Many times it was a day just like these. Enjoy these days!

See you at the May meeting.- Rosanne