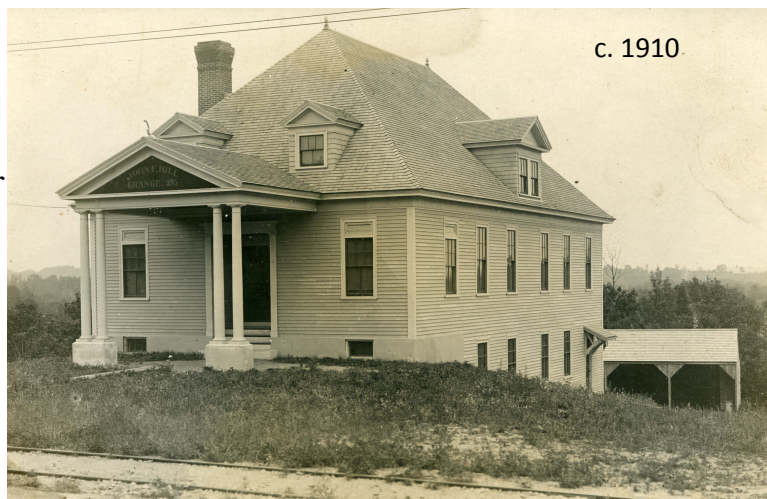


Next Meeting: April 10th: Please note we are meeting the **2nd** Monday of the month due to a scheduling conflict. For our program Jennifer Hunter of the **York River Study Committee** will provide an update on the project. She will be joined by other members of the committee and members of their contractor team who will conduct architectural history and archaeological surveys in the upper part of the York River watershed. The York River Study Committee is being funded through a grant from the National Park Service to determine if the York River meets the criteria to be designated as a federally protected Wild and Scenic River. Even if it meets the criteria, citizens would have to vote in favor of the designation. The Historical Society has been asked to help assist the project and Committee will be looking for ideas (and volunteers!) from us. Following the program refreshments will be served by Ruth Hirst.

March meeting notes:

Margaret Morse, Master of the John F. Hill Grange, gave a wonderful talk on the history of the Grange starting from the National level right down to the Grange in our town. The *John F. Hill Grange* #393 was formed by a group of civic minded people on May 20, 1902. Being a rural community it was felt that this fraternal order, based on agriculture would be a real asset.



The twenty-eight who became the charter members met at what was then the Eliot Town Hall on State Road, which has since been torn down. They elected their first officers that night. Albert Nowell was its first Master. It was established as *Piscataqua Grange* 393, until its members applied for a dispensation from the National Grange to honor its native son, who had been a Governor of Maine and so on June 2, 1902 it became the *John F. Hill Grange*. The members immediately began working on plans for a building and building began in the summer of 1910. The company of McKenny and Littlefield of Portsmouth was the builder at a cost of \$6000. This building, built on land purchased from Joseph Kennard, was dedicated on

December 9, 1910, the year of our Town's Centennial. John F. Hill gave a monetary gift of \$1000 to provide the building steam heat and his wife bought the kitchen stove and dishes. Sixteen years after it's dedication the mortgage was paid off. The Grange over the years has seen a cycle of times of growth and decline. In 1935 they experienced their first decline and continued through the war years. Things began to turn around when in 1946 the town leased the building for a period of 15 years as the location of the town offices while the Grange continued to use the building for their meetings. Many may remember that the town clerk's office was completely contained within what is now the coat room of the Grange! In 1951 a very successful Juvenile Grange was



established and flourished for a number of years and the building received a new life with various groups using the building and with the holding of community events here including minstrel shows, school basket ball games, movie nights for families, and Santa visits for the children following the

lighting of the town's Christmas tree at the Library (before it was moved to Hammond Park). In the 1960's the Grange members held rummage sales here, sponsored bike and doll carriage decorating contests, held Farmer's Markets during the summer in concert with the Eliot Garden Club, which continued until 2002, Harvest Suppers for the people of Eliot each year. Through the 1980's they held art exhibits, flower shows and sponsored art competitions in the schools and until fairly recently have participated in the Eliot Festival Day festivities. Over the years the Grange has been used by almost every organization in town as their meeting site and the building has seen its share of religious services, baby and wedding showers, dance classes, weddings, birthday and anniversary parties, family reunions, community suppers, celebrations of all kinds, and boy and girl scout meetings. In 2010, they opened their doors for the Town's Bicentennial celebration and worked with the

Historical Society to provide displays on the history of our town and the Grange. With their membership again on the decline and their aging population they have had to replace active service to the community with service in the form of offering scholarships to students and contributing in other ways. The history of the Grange continues to be written and as more people are turning back to becoming more self sufficient and Community Supported Agriculture evolves in our town, along with small farming operations involving both food and livestock products, there comes the opportunity for the Grange to grow again. The Grange is seeking new members. Please contact Margaret Morse at 439-0413.

Kim Richards and Connie Weeks of the Eliot Conservation Commission

shared with us information about some things that the Conservation Commission would like to place on the Town Warrant in June. As they pointed out the work of the Conservation Commission and the work of Historical Society often find common purpose as most recently in the preservation of the Libby property and the old Libby Lane. They came asking for our member's support and votes on using \$40,000, that is already in the town's Land Bank Reserve Fund, as a contribution to the Great Works Regional Land Trust in their purchase of the "Goodwin Farm" on Goodwin Road. This is the family farm of the late

June Goodwin who served as the EHS treasurer for many years and was an active member of our Society The



GWRLT has already purchased the property at a cost of over \$300,000. Of the 117 acres, 114 acres will be made permanently preserved and made available to the citizens of Eliot for use. Plans included parking on Goodwin Road and trails into the property for hiking and skiing. As they said it is only right that the people of Eliot make a contribution toward something that we will have the benefit of. The Commission also voted to support the acquisition of an easement for part of the "Libby" property acquired bought by members of our community who are seeking to preserve the lands for the use of Eliot's citizens and to ask the citizens to appropriate an amount on money to be placed back into the town's Land Bank.

Monies for Eliot's Land Bank Fund come from appropriations voted upon by the citizens of Eliot and help insure that when projects such as these come up that money is available to help pay for the easements which preserve open space lands in our town for the use of ALL of Eliot's citizens. They encouraged people to come to the Citizen's Budget Initiative (Option) Meeting on April 3rd to support these recommendations and to vote in June.



Dinner Fundraiser – March 25th

Experience a little taste of Italy at a family dinner on March 25th at the Congregational Church, McPherson Hall, State Road. 5-7pm. \$10 for adults and \$6 for children. Menu: 3 kinds of lasagna, salad, bread, drinks, brownies with either whipped cream or ice cream.

Eliot Stories Project

The ***Eliot Stories Project*** undertaken by the 2nd grade teachers at the Elementary School is well underway. The 80 children met with Laura Downey, the founder of “The Local Stories Project”, on March 6th for instruction on what the project will entail, including journaling, conducting interviews and producing artistic presentations which combine theater, music and art. On March 9th author Patricia Q. Wall and Rosanne Adams will meet with the children to talk about the enslaved peoples of the town during the early period of our settlement up to the 1800's. And on March 16th. Nancy Cultrera will talk about the Civil War, sharing with the children the stories and letters of her great grandfather who was stationed in New Bern, NC. These “interviews” by the children are open to the public if you are interested in attending. People who have knowledge of the brickyards are still being sought. If you know of someone who might be able to speak with the children please contact **Jan Cerabona at 748-0932 or jcerab2805@aol.com.**

Area News and Events:

March 11th : Great Works Regional Land Trust Spring Auction.

5-9PM. Spring Hill, Pond Road, South Berwick.

March 23rd : The Communications Frontier in Early New

England is the subject of the Old Berwick Historical Society's March lecture. Dr. Katherine Grandjean will discuss her recent book, *American Passage*, and shed new light on the subject of early communication and its impact on the settlement of New England. "In the colonial world, news was currency. But it was often unreliable," said Nina Maurer, consulting curator for Old Berwick Historical Society. "Communication is an underlying theme of our lecture series, and communication between the first immigrants to our region and indigenous people is a focus of our upcoming exhibit, *Forgotten Frontier*." The event will be held at the Berwick Academy Arts Center in South Berwick at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public. Donations are gratefully accepted. Preceding the lecture, Berwick Academy is holding an opening reception for the new exhibit, *Weaving Community*, an exhibit of Native American baskets by artists of the Wabanaki Nations, at 6:00 p.m. in the Jackson Library Gallery, on the second floor of the Jackson Library building at the center of campus. The exhibit is a collection of baskets from the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, local gallery owners, and area collectors.

April 3rd: Annual Town Citizens Budget Initiative [Option]

Meeting – This meeting provides for the citizens of Eliot to discuss to proposed Town budget that will be voted on in June and, if we wish, to make our own recommendations as to how our money should be spent. As of the printing of our newsletter the meeting is set for April 3rd at the Eliot Elementary School. Please check the town website and newspapers for any change.

April 26-29th: 14th New England Regional Genealogical

Conference, Springfield, MA. There will be a session led by Brenda Sullivan entitled: The Cemetery: A Valuable Resource for Genealogists. For details about the conference: visit their website at <http://www.nergc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/NERGC-2017-E-zine-7.pdf> or contact Rosanne @ 207-752-0174.

The William Fogg Library is offering **Free In-Person Tax**

Preparation Service. If you are 50 or older or can't afford paid tax preparation you may want to take advantage of this service. Please call 439-9437 to schedule an appointment. The service will be offered **Mondays from 1-4PM and Thursdays 10am-2pm** and will run from **February 2nd to April 17th**

Recent Acquisitions

Back in 2013 I received an old scrapbook, in very poor condition but containing news clippings and documents dating back to 1851. It was sent to me by Susan Hanley of Peaks Island, Maine. She says she found it on the island, it having been discarded following a rummage sale. The pages have been removed from the book and labeled for ease of storage and copying. It contains some wonderful information on the people of Eliot!

On their 25th Wedding Anniversary a husband took his wife out to dinner. Their teenage daughters said they'd have dessert waiting for them when they returned. After the couple got home they saw that the dining room table was beautifully set with china, crystal and candles, and a note that read: "Your dessert is in the fridge. We are staying with friends, so go ahead and do something we wouldn't do!" "I suppose," the husband said to his wife, "we could vacuum."



Looking down Greenwood Street from Main Street c. 1910