

ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Minutes of the meeting – February 6, 2017

President Paul Johnson called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. There were 34 people present. He thanked Julie Johnson for the refreshments that evening.

Secretary's Report –The minutes of the January meeting were approved as read with one correction noted.

Treasurer's Report – Pam Ashley gave the report for the month ending January 31, 2017. The report was approved as presented. The balances were \$8,472.01 in checking and \$40,225.31 in the Building Fund accounts (report attached). Income came from dues and donations. Expenditures were for rental and electricity.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Correspondence – Helen Sullivan announced that it was Margie Brown's birthday. Paul Johnson mentioned that he sent a thank you note to Charlotte Morgridge for the clock that was donated for the schoolhouse.

Membership – Sylvia Moynahan reported that we have a new lifetime member, Sophia Dennis.

Programs – Carolyn Bogh informed us that Margaret Morse of the Grange will be the speaker at the March meeting. She is a long-time past secretary of the Eliot Historical Society and will talk about the history of the Grange. We can also look forward to a presentation in September by Pat Wall about slavery in the early history of our town and her new book. In November, Walter Hanson will put on a reenactment of a Vietnam-era medical hospital. She thanked the presenters who pinch-hit last month with their slide show. She reminded folks that there is now a donations jar at each meeting for those who wish to donate.

Collections – Julie Johnson reported that there is a new trustee of the William Fogg Library, Deb Crozier. She has meet with her about some of their historical artifacts. Julie mentioned donations of a reproduction from 1670 of the shoreline, class reunion photos from 1830 to 1901, some items from the Plaisted house, and clothing donated by the Cultreras from her ancestor dating back to 1891, including a wedding dress.

Building Committee – Zip Zamarchi, Skip Brown, Jack McDonough and Paul Johnson solved some heating and electrical issues in the storage area.

Fundraising – Cindy Lentz reported that the next fundraiser is a lasagna dinner in late March. There will be a yard sale in May. We will have sign-ups for both. Please save your potential yard sale items. For the dinner, we will have salad, rolls, a variety of lasagnas and a brownie dessert. We will need helpers for all aspects of this dinner. Cindy also updated us on End 68 Hours of Hunger, which we have supported with food and people-power. It costs \$10 per child to feed a child and we help about 30 children. The current coordinator has gotten donations from businesses, is providing healthier menu options, and we pack non-perishable foods in non-breakable containers.

Education - Jan Cerabona reported on the Stories Project. March 6th is the kick-off of the program when children will begin their journals. Some of the helpers include Justin Gilbert talking about the Lanier history, Rosanne discussing slavery, and others who know about the brickyards. In April the children will be coming to the No. 8 Schoolhouse. They will be taking a gundalow trip in May. At the end of the program there will be a presentation to the public and all are invited to take part. The William Fogg Library may be working on the coloring book update as well.

Grants – Helen Goransson has received approval from the board to proceed with a Maine Community Foundation grant proposal to receive funds to help Build Community through a joint project with the William Fogg Library. The deadline for submission was February 15th. This grant would help pay for a temporary curator for us to catch up with cataloguing our collection and to be able to display some of it at the Fogg Homestead during the summer months. This person would also be working as a docent at the Fogg Homestead during the summer, and someone from the University of New Hampshire's Museum Studies program will provide training and advice to members of both organizations. There is no news yet from the Fabulous Find about that application.

NEW BUSINESS

Larry McCullough spoke to some of our members about joining a group which is forming to organize community events. Currently there are representatives from Green Acre, the Library, the Methodist Church and Larry. Jack McDonough volunteered to represent us at the next meeting on February 11th at the Library.

The business portion of the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

Nancy Cultrera, who taught for 35 years in the Marshwood school system and has been retired since 2001, shared with us her family's fascinating Civil War history. Her son David and other members of her family were on hand to help pass around photos and illustrations. She produced a booklet of letters that Charles Richard Baker wrote while serving in the war during 1861-63. It includes 22 letters transcribed from her great grandfather's originals, a map of North Carolina where he served, and a copy of his discharge documents. Her interest in the Civil War was piqued when she took a course at Bowdoin College that focused on the career of Joshua Chamberlain, known for fighting in the battle at Little Round Top, a student of Bowdoin himself who later became governor of Maine, and a great hero of our state. She had her great grandfather's letters which she copied in 1995 and shared with her fifth graders at Eliot Elementary School. She keeps the originals well protected in a safe and her son Stephen is the guardian of these. They are priceless and extremely valuable but are kept in the family as a part of its history. Charles Baker was the eldest of 5 children of Sam Baker and Rachel Cole who married in the 1840's. Charles married Sarah Smith in 1865. When he went off to the Civil War he carried her picture in his pocket during the entire time and on the back of the picture he listed all the skirmishes and battles in which he was involved. Their only child was born in 1866, Nancy's grandfather. Charles was a house painter in Westwood, Massachusetts and Sarah was a dressmaker. Most of the letters were written to his mother and he had beautiful penmanship. He was in the 43rd regiment of the Massachusetts infantry. He mustered in September 1862 and was a member of the Tiger regiment of 300-400 men who left for battle in November of 1862. At first he was thrilled, but by the end of his 9 month stint he declared, never again. He was mostly in the area of Newburn, North Carolina, which was strategic because of the railroad there which went to the South. In March of 1863 was the Battle at Newburn where they were victorious and there he stayed. While there, there were 3 major skirmishes. Nowadays they still do battle reenactments there. These letters are unique because they tell first-hand what it was like to be a soldier. They describe 1) the housing, which consisted of barracks and tents, 2) the miles and miles of marching, averaging 25 hot, painful, sickening miles per day, 3) coping with sleep, insects, snakes and wildlife, 4) supplies and how they relied on items sent from home, even bullets, 5) music that was popular, which tended to be melancholy, and 6) poetry about the troops and their experiences. He was a member of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) for which each veteran received a star on their gravestone. There is a monument in Westwood to Charles who died in 1925 at the age of 84.

Respectfully submitted, Helen Goransson, Secretary