

ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Minutes of the meeting – September 12, 2016

President Rosanne Fisher called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. There were 30 people present.

Secretary's Report –The minutes of the June meeting were approved as read with some small corrections noted.

Treasurer's Report – The report for the months of June through August was approved. The balances as of end-August were \$8,429.50 in checking and \$40,194.67 in the Building Fund accounts (report attached). Income came from dues, funds received from the Town of Eliot, and interest. Expenditures included rents, electricity, and Eliot Festival Day fees.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Grants – Helen Goransson reported that she has submitted a funding request to The Fabulous Find in Kittery, in hopes that they will select us to receive a share of the income from their sales during one of their future months. Jan Cerabona reported that the Elementary School grant discussed last time was submitted to the Marshwood Educational Foundation for their consideration.

Building – Paul Johnson reported that Zip Zamarchi, Denny Lentz and Skip Brown helped with some mowing and tree pruning, Skip helped with some painting, a crew from the Brown family cleaned the refrigerator, and Zip Zamarchi did some woodworking on the front columns. Thank you to all involved, including Paul.

Collections – Paul Johnson reported that Phil Drake donated papers about the Frost Garrison – not the Major Charles Frost but the Colonel John Frost garrison which dates back to around 1730. This was not a residential garrison but one meant for refuge from danger, with space for livestock on the first level and people on the second level. It had a couple of ells and no tunnel. It is located on Frost Hill. The papers depicted how to construct a garrison using the enormous timbers of the day. It is not too visible as it is overgrown with trees. The Boy Scouts had cleaned it out a couple of years ago when it was overgrown with vegetation.

Programs – Rosanne announced a program worth seeing at the next Old Berwick Historical Society meeting about Cochranism, a kind of cult that had extremely liberal

views in the early 1800's. Our program next month will be a presentation by the York River Study Committee.

Fundraising – Sylvia Moynahan passed around a signup sheet for baking and coverage at the Eliot Festival Day where we will be selling baked goods and odds and ends, along with memberships. A new idea for fundraising will be our presence at the fireworks the night before where we will be selling hot drinks. This is the brainchild of Margie Brown and she and Skip will be in charge but would appreciate help with the setup and coverage of that stand. Sylvia and Carol Zamarchi said that new members to this committee are always welcome.

Nomination Committee – This committee will be meeting and providing a slate of officers to be voted upon at the December meeting. The following agreed to serve: Sylvia Moynahan, Carol Zamarchi and Bobbi Beavers.

OLD BUSINESS

We need to address the issue of dampness where we store our collection. We discussed getting electric power to that area and obtaining a dehumidifier. Zip Zamarchi agreed to check it out.

NEW BUSINESS

Rosanne made a proposal to help fund a scholarly work being published by Patricia Wall about African slaves in the Piscataqua region during colonial times. This includes both Maine and New Hampshire. We have heard the story of "Black Will", a slave of the Shapleighs who was emancipated and purchased property in Kittery, of which Eliot was part, and Wall's research delves into the black community in our area. The title of the book is "Lives of Consequence". Bob Fisher moved that we make a donation in the amount of \$200 to help with the publication. Bobbi Beavers seconded the motion. During discussion, Carolyn Bogh suggested we have Wall come to speak to us about the project. The motion passed.

We thanked the Browns for the evening's refreshments. The business portion of the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

PROGRAM

Eric Christian, one of our members, has been a genealogy enthusiast for over 16 years, in particular the tracing of lines of descent, paper genealogies, census reports and most recently using DNA testing to solve riddles about family lineage. Paper genealogy pertains to records available through family, municipal, government and church records and the Internet. More and more of these records are being digitized so they are more readily searchable and accessible. Now, with such DNA services and digital services as those provided through Ancestry.com, 23andMe, FamilySeach.org, and the like, it is possible to learn one's genetic make-up from many generations ago, connect people that have potential matches to help find relatives, and solve family mysteries. It is always important to look at the search results analytically and make sure they make sense, as they are prone to errors as well. And, of course, all it takes is a non-parental event (i.e. children born from undocumented fathers or mothers) to throw off the DNA matches. For some interesting reading on that subject, Richard Hill is the author of the book Finding Family which describes his experience tracking down his birth family.

Respectfully submitted, Helen Goransson, Secretary