

## **ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Minutes of the Meeting – September 11, 2017**

President Paul Johnson called the business portion of the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**Secretary's Report** - The minutes of the June meeting were read and accepted.

**Treasurer's Report** - Pam Ashley reported for the months of June-August, 2017. The report was approved as read. The balances as of August 31<sup>st</sup> were: Savings Account - \$29,359.91 and Certificate of Deposit - \$10,889.59, for a Building Fund total of \$40,249.50. Checking Account balance was \$7,827.02. Expenditures were for rent, electricity, Eliot Festival Day booth, and cemetery repairs. Income came from bank interest.

**Correspondence** – Helen Sullivan reported that we sent a sympathy card to the Browns, a thank you note to Doris Grover, and Paul Johnson reported on the improving health of the Searles and we will send them a card.

**Membership** - We have 2 new members as a result of the Staples book presentation in June.

**Programs** – In October, Paul Goransson will describe farming operations on his Eliot farm.

**Collections** – Julie Johnson reported that we have received a number of items, including a picture of George Ireland, the store owner at the corner of Depot and State Roads, photographed at his store when the trolley still rode by there, as evidenced by the trolley tracks in the photo. We have also received a framed Eliot High School diploma for Lewis Worster from Linda Lockhart, an antique chair from Cathy Spellacy which we will put in the No. 8 Schoolhouse, and a family Bible from a friend of Jeanette Paul that belonged to Lillian Dame, the sister of Ella V. Dame. Rosanne Fisher added that we also purchased from eBay a document about an upcoming school committee meeting from 1872 about the No. 8 Schoolhouse and how to screen teacher candidates. A while ago we established a policy for obtaining pertinent historical artifacts from eBay and similar websites, whereby a committee comprised of Eric Christian and Rosanne needs to be contacted first to ensure that we don't end up bidding against ourselves for a worthwhile item.

**Building Committee** - Paul Johnson reported that he and Zip Zamarchi, Denny Lentz, Jack McDonough and Skip Brown worked on the grounds of the Grange during the summer.

**Education** - Jan Cerabona had nothing new to report, except that that evening a number of our members visited the Elementary School to see the mural, and that 10 families had come to the open house at the Schoolhouse.

**Fundraisers** – We will need baked goods and some coverage for our Eliot Festival Day booth.

**Old Business** – Paul Johnson said that people had a fine time at the August cook-out.

**New Business** – Zip Zamarchi described a plan in the works to put up monuments at various historical sites around town and he shared a description and image of one that would be more descriptive and pictorial. The first attempt will be to put up one across the street from the Elementary School. He noted that pedestal plaques can be very informative and people can stop and read them. Whatever we do, it will be proposed to the membership beforehand. He envisions more sites in the future, similar to what has been done in Kittery and other towns. Eric Christian suggested the formation of a committee. Jack McDonough moved that we continue to pursue this and gather information before taking another vote. This was approved in principle and in October we will set up a committee to move forward.

Since there were no activities planned for the Friday night of Eliot Festival weekend, the Friends of the William Fogg Library will be having a dance that Friday evening at the Regatta, with the popular band “Something in the Water” and hearty hors d’oeuvres served, to benefit their capital campaign to build an addition to the building that would afford the town more meeting space, too. Members were encouraged to attend.

We thanked Margie and Skip Brown and Ruth Drake for the delicious refreshments.

The business portion of the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

### Program

Patricia Q. Wall has spent more than 5 years researching enslaved people and their owners from our area, i.e. the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parish of Kittery which was a part of Massachusetts at the time. During the 1670’s there were scattered settlements across the Berwicks all the way to Kittery Point. Her new book, “Lives of Consequence: Blacks in Early Kittery and Berwick in the Massachusetts Province of Maine”, compiles all that she learned about New England’s African-American history. Although barely documented, slavery was widespread due to the lack of manpower to work in the colonies. In 1641, Massachusetts made slavery legal, with the caveat that slavery was only legal when slaves were captured

in wars or “when people sold them to us”. The labor of slaves made great contributions to the progress of our country. According to the census taken during that time, every town had enslaved people. Rhode Island was the major New England port for importing slaves. Eliot was the first state to officially record an enslaved person and the last one, too, the first in 1663 when William Elliot bought Mingo and a horse from someone in York, and in 1863 a tombstone was erected for Heddy, who was held by Elisha Shapleigh, who lived 100 years as a slave. This is the only tombstone for an enslaved person that Patricia could find.

Records are very scarce, as Patricia dug through probate records, articles, and numerous other sources, but they were just bits and pieces, such as a first name or a mention of someone. 450-500 blacks were accounted for in her book, 85 of whom came from our parish of Kittery, and all of Kittery totaled around 200. She found enough material to create profiles of 5 of them and these are detailed in her book. Of most interest to us is the story of Black Will who eventually became a landowner and we believe he bought 100 acres in Kittery near Marsh Hill, below Goodwin Road. Rosanne Fisher is researching what happened after he died in the early 1700's. He became a free man in 1700 and black families settled along and around that property, the first black community in the state. The townspeople needed them for their farms and businesses. Black Will personally helped in efforts to free friends who were slaves. His sons served in our wars. For more details, read Patricia's book.

Respectfully submitted, Helen Goransson, Secretary