

March 4 – Monthly Meeting at the John F. Hill Grange Hall starting at 7pm. Refreshments will be served by Jack and Polly McDonough.

Society News and Events



At our **February meeting** author **Michael Cameron Ward** shared with us his recent book ***A Colored Man in Exeter***. The book tells his family history in the form of stories related to him by his father Harold E. Ward before passing in 2015 at the age of 94. Harold asked Michael to write down the family history so that his grandchildren and great-grandchildren will know where they came from.

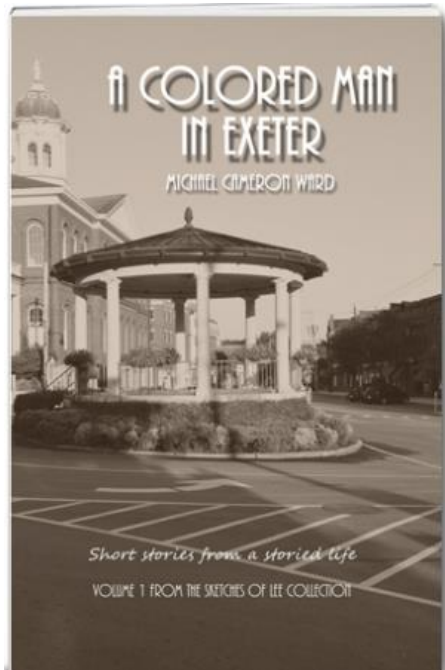
He told of us his family of 6, in 1957, leaving the harsh city life in Brooklyn, New York and moving to what he described as a house on a two lane “strip of dirt” in Lee, NH, to escape gang violence. Through some very humorous, as well as serious and moving stories, Michael gave us insight into the reality of the lives of the first colored family to live in Lee, leading us through their becoming accustomed to their new life and dealing with the underlying racism they encountered. He spoke about the great “awakening” they had as they quickly learned the effort and skills that it would



Maine statehood has significantly different meanings and implications based on where in the state one lives. For French-speaking residents of the St. John Valley, for example, statehood challenged deep connections with Quebec and New Brunswick. When the international boundary was permanently identified in 1842, the border divided communities that had shared the St. John River, often resulting in a sense of loss. Admission of Maine and Missouri (part of the territory in the Louisiana Purchase) were linked to one another by Congress, which fueled an explosive argument about the future of slavery in the USA controversial compromise that allowed slavery in Missouri passed the House of Representatives by just three votes (with two of Maine’s seven Representatives among only fourteen northern politicians who favored this resolution). William King of Bath served as Maine’s first governor, although he resigned to take a diplomatic position after 14 months as governor. King favored the compromise to admit Missouri as a slave state, yet his half-brother, Rufus King of New York, was a leading anti-slavery leader in the US Senate.

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take to survive out in the country. Their 82-acre farm eventually prospered and they were able to share their extra produce with the town’s food pantry and help their community in other ways. They experienced the kindness of neighbors and those willing to stand up to decry racism, but they also encountered those who clung to the stereotypes of colored peoples and treated them with distain and hatred, including threats to burn down their home. In the midst of seeing the unrest and race riots of the 1960’s there was always the fear and the thought – “are we next?”.

A Colored Man in Exeter is the first in a four volume series entitled “Sketches of Lee”. It is a biographical account of Harold E. Ward’s life and times beginning with his maternal family’s slave origins on

Zacaray Taylor’s plantation in 1852-4, through his childhood, his WWII US Navy career and his post retirement in the Exeter, NH hospitality trade. Other volumes will explore their life in Lee NH from 1957-2017, his mother Virginia E. Ward’s biography with her family history from 1850 onward; and stories about activities and residents on their road and miscellaneous family stories.

eBooks can be downloaded from SketchesofLee.com for \$4.99. Online Softcovers are \$14.99 plus shipping and handling: Amazon, Barnes and Nobles and SketchesofLee.com.

Signed editions (\$14.99) are available at Water St. Bookstore, Trends and Exeter Cycles in Exeter and at Riverrun Bookstore, Portsmouth Historical Society in Portsmouth, NH.

LASAGNA DINNER!

SAVE THE DATE:

MARCH 23

4:30-6:30 Congregational Church

Once again, our Fund-Raising crew will organize a fundraising LASAGNA DINNER. You’ll be hearing more about how you can help as plans are finalized.



“HOMETOWN ROOTS”

Plans are being finalized for this year’s collaboration with the 2nd grade teachers at the Eliot Elementary School for their Eliot history unit



Eliot Elementary School recently received a grant for “Hometown Roots”, providing seed money for a three-year plan to extend student research and expand their mobile mural. The students will be talking with local elders and historians investigating the history of our schools and then selecting narratives from that research. Returning artists in residence will work with the children to expand the existing mural. As part of their plans our Historical Society will host a visit to our

8 Schoolhouse in April, followed by an open house for parents, as well as visits by the 2nd graders to the Grange and William Fogg House where they will explore several aspects of the town’s history. The public will be invited to the Elementary School in May for a presentation, by the students, featuring what they have learned.

The **Historical Society**, under **Jan Cerabona’s** leadership, will be offering an after-school community service group program for 3rd graders who will research Eliot’s one-room schools to gain more information and serve as mentors to the younger children. As part of their research they will be taking field trips to the library and #8 Schoolhouse, writing

HOMETOWN ROOTS

DATES TO REMEMBER

MARCH 29 – 9-2 - CHILDREN’S PROGRAM AT GRANGE, FOGG HOUSE AND WILLIAM FOGG LIBRARY

APRIL 3 – CHILDREN VISIT # 8 SCHOOLHOUSE

APRIL 4 – EVENING PROGRAM – MARGARET MORSE WILL TALK ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE JOHN F. HILL GRANGE

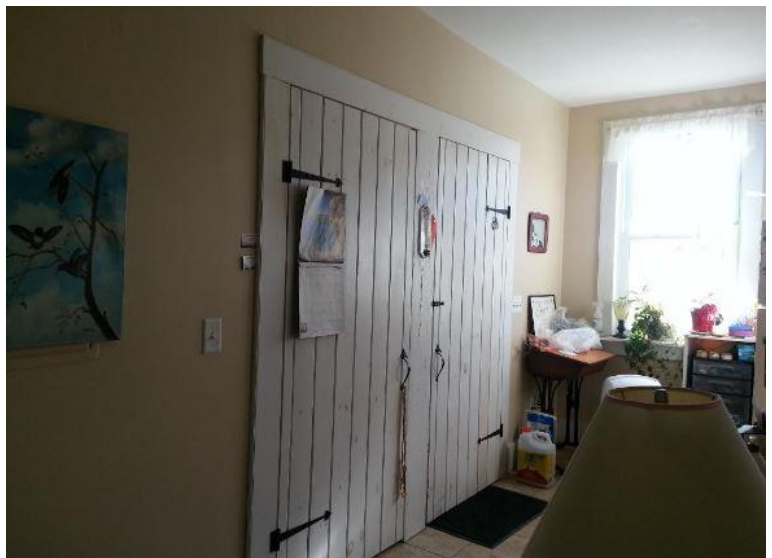
MAY 9 – 6 PM - CHILDREN’S PERFORMANCE - ELIOT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

letters and interviewing older residents, helping put together the displays at the Elementary School and designing a map showing the locations of Eliot's one-room schoolhouses. The 2nd graders will then use this information to produce a floor size map of the town showing the schoolhouses.

Jan Cerabona has been working hard, gathering information, contacting people, gathering her "team" together and setting up the classes and 2nd grade visits. She and I toured the town recently to see the location of all the schoolhouses and we were able to talk with a few of the property owners, who showed us the particular "school" features of their homes.



June Downing, who re-purposed the #3 or Major Charles Frost School on Brixham Road took us on a tour of her "one-room" home and talked with us about her days at the school. She had the shortest walk to school – just up from her home at the foot of the hill behind it – and recalls the location of her desk, the stove at the front of the room and that at the back it was VERY cold since the only heat was from the stovepipe running from front to back.





To start things off **Julie Johnson** and her sister **Nancy Bartlett** set up a new display at the Elementary School, featuring pictures and items from various schools. These displays will be changed out in March (focusing on the one-room schoolhouses) and then again in April.

[Amazing how some people can fit IN the display case!]

Stay tuned for more information as HOMETOWN ROOTS gets underway!

Eliot’s New Solar Array!



The sun cooperated on Friday January 4th for the ribbon-cutting ceremony official “opening” the solar array at the Eliot Transfer Station. Town Manager Dana Lee conducted the program introducing Edward Henningsen, chair of our Eliot

Energy Commission, who outlined the history of this solar array project, followed by representatives of CMP who facilitated the set up and Revision Energy who did the installation.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

- Ingrid Kelly**
- Tracy Graffam-Didson**
- Debbie Scribner**
- Danielle La Flamme**
- Karen Webster**
- Jim Staples**
- Barbara and Steve Kumin**
- Barbara and George Remick**
- Elaine and Richard Plaisted**

Joining those gathered for the ribbon cutting ceremony were members (past and present) of our Energy Commission and Select Board, officials from Kittery, South Berwick, York and Ogunquit, town employees and residents and newly elected representative Michelle Meyer. This is the second solar array installation. The first which was installed on the Highway Department building roof, was commissioned on June 12th, 2014. It comprises 165 Canadian Solar 250-watt panel and 4 inverters. Over the last 5 years the array has generated approximately 45,000 kWh per year of electricity. The Town purchased the array in December of 2018 for \$43,000. Now all the energy produced will go directly to offsetting electrical usage by Town buildings. The new solar array on the Town's landfill is estimated to generate 171,000 kWh annually which will decrease as the panels The array was installed under a Plan Purchase Agreement where the contractor installs and owns the array until the Town purchases it. It is anticipated that



the two arrays will generate about 95% of the electricity used by the Town buildings, sewer pumps, parks and stop lights.

Production data (daily and in real time) is available on the town's website.



The Mission of the Eliot Energy Commission shall be to promote increased energy conservation, efficiency, and local energy production throughout the Town of Eliot. – Eliot Town Website info.



EVENTS



FEBRUARY 13 -14 - FRIENDS OF THE WILLIAM FOGG LIBRARY'S ANNUAL RED, WHITE AND CHOCOLATE SALE! February 13th from 1-8 pm and Thursday, February 14th from 10-5 pm.

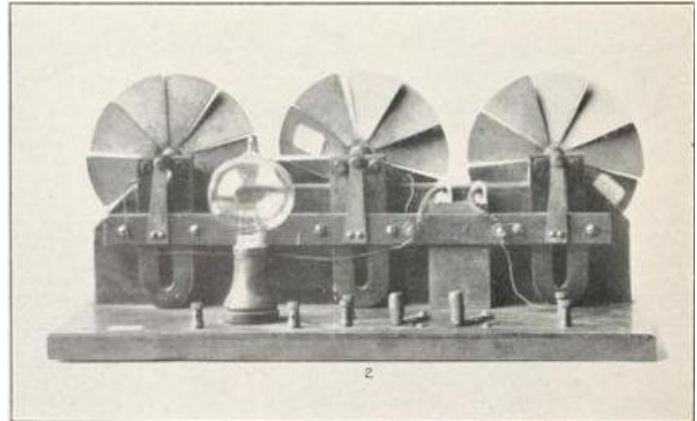
MARCH 15 – MAINE 199: BICENTENNIAL OR BUST - Morgan Hill Event Center, Hermon, ME. 10-3. Sponsored by the Maine Humanities Council and Maine Historical Society. Learn how your community can get started planning for the Bicentennial, what resources are available and how to connect with statewide bicentennial activities.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MOSES GERRISH FARMER!

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FEBRUARY 9TH is the birthday of **Moses Gerrish Farmer**. Born in Boscawen, NH in 1820, he came to Eliot in 1843 to teach at the ELIOT ACADEMY where he met, and later married his pupil Hannah Tobey Shapleigh. Moses invented the first incandescent light bulb in 1859, with which he illuminated his home in Salem, Mass. Thomas Edison was 12 years old at the time! Late in life Moses patented over 100 of his inventions. He even invented a wind electric generator in 1880!



Farmer home “Bittersweet” decorated for the town’s Centennial in 1910. Building to the left, at rear, is Moses Farmer’s workshop, later moved to the right of the house. For many years the Robert Perham family lived there.



The MARCH Newsletter will be very late but we’ll keep you updated about any Society happenings. (Time for a vacation!)