

Upcoming Meeting: February 5th at the John F. Hill Grange Hall, State Road beginning at 7 PM. Dominique Metreaud will speak about the electric trolley waiting station that was recently returned to its original location at Green Acre. He will share with us its history and its restoration. Refreshments will be served by Helen Sullivan, Jan Cerabona, and Nancy Cultrera.

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Helen Goransson, our Grant Chair, was informed that the Historical Society had been chosen to be one of the recipients of proceeds from The FABULOUS FIND, in Kittery, during the month of January! The FABULOUS FIND is a non-profit resale boutique that donates its proceeds to local nonprofits. Opened in 2010, they recently crossed their \$1 million mark in monies raised for non-profit organizations in just six and a half years! Saturday, January 6th President Paul Johnson, joined by several Society members, attended a reception where December's organizations were presented with checks and January's organizations were introduced. Paul spoke about our group and the service it provides the community.



Please encourage your friends to shop at and/or donate their gently used items during January. The more the store sells the more we will receive!

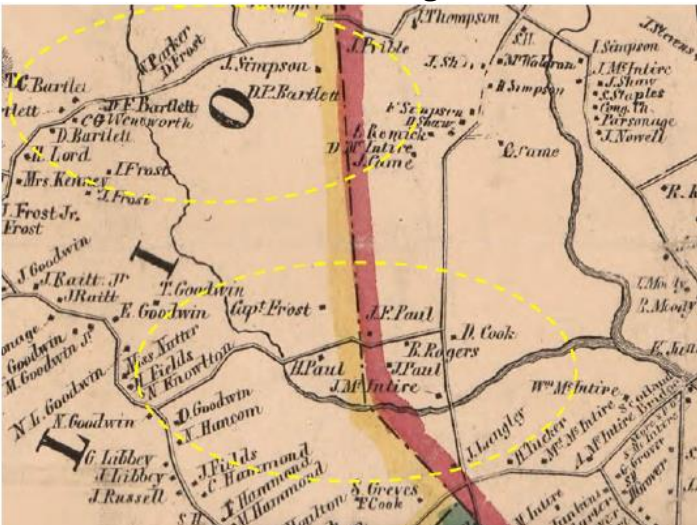


coordinator for the *York River Study Committee* was joined by Gemma Hudgell and Steve Scharoun from Northeast Archaeology Research Center and Scott Stevens from Groundroot Preservation Group to present the findings of the study to over 70 interested citizens. They will be recommending that the York River be designated as a Wild and Scenic River.

The only restrictions as a Partnership Wild and Scenic River is that it is required to remain free-flowing (no new dams or flow obstructions). The local land use regulations govern future use of the lands surround. There are NO new federal regulations or limits on local land use. The town, will of course, have to vote on whether we want the designation. The Partnership encourages local river management and the involvement of public participation (partnership) in developing goals for its protection and use and therefore the Study Committee is now developing a suggested local stewardship plan and are seeking input from the public. This document will then be given to the town for its use as it develops its own plans. **Their next meeting is January 23rd at the Grant House on Rt. 1, York at 5:30pm.**

Scott spoke about the architectural survey his firm did in the research area. Using National Register criteria, they looked at buildings in those areas that had not been

previously surveyed – parts of Brixham Road and Frost Hill Road to the York line. It is in these areas that the highest concentration of above-ground historic resources exists in the study area.



EHS OFFICERS

President – Paul Johnson
Vice President – Dennis Lentz
Treasurer – Pam Ashley
Secretary – Helen Goransson

Membership – Sylvia Moynahan.

Board of Directors:
Polly McDonough (2018)
Ernie Bruneau (2019)
Kathy Runey (2020))

A reminder that your dues are due! As a non-profit

are due! As a non-profit organization, members are a major source of financial resources. The work toward preserving the past would not be possible without you.

Our calendar year begins on January 1st.

A membership costs \$10.00 for individual/year, \$50.00 for individual lifetime membership or \$75.00 for a lifetime family membership which includes immediate family and children living at home under the age of 21.

Please see Sylvia Moynahan
to make your payment or
send a check to P.O. Box, 3,
Eliot, ME 03903.

They also surveyed Punkintown. Steven noted that on Frost Hill the Col. John Frost garrison, which was once part of a very large farm, is the most prominent structure, but has lost its historical and agricultural context due to the development in that area. Steven noted that at one time you would have been able to see to the York River from the garrison. He also explained that the barns found in the study area date from the 1830's on. He finished by talking about future protection of these historical architectural resources and retaining historical context and gave several examples of how Eliot could do this.

Archaeologist Gemma Hedgell then talked about how she and her team went about identifying possible sites through research and field inspection. They concentrated on the upper part of the York River since this area had not been surveyed previously. First they determined the areas that held the most possibility – areas near the river, but well drained, where Native peoples might have encamped. They also identified post-contact sites. They identified 23 areas with 20 of these, in the general vicinity of Punkintown identified as possible native American sites. They had hoped to do at least



40 test pits but were ultimately able to do 80. They recovered 48 native American artifacts, including a 5000 year old arrowhead, and 414 Euro-American artifacts with all but 1 of these from Punkintown. Of the sites there were 6 newly identified Native American sites and 6 historic Euro-American sites. Gemma explained that 6 out of 9 sites yielded Native American artifacts which indicates a high potential for finding others through further study. Recovered were Native American cultural material including lithic flakes and fire-cracked rock indicating a relatively small encampment,

rather than a large village, and activities such as the production and/or sharpening of a knife or projectile point and activities associated with a fire hearth, probably including cooking. Although occupied on multiple occasions it was probably not a permanent encampment. Also recovered were shards of pottery, nails, melted glass and metal work.



The complete reports can be found at the York River Study Committee's website:

<http://www.yorkrivermaine.org/study-documents/>:

- Archaeology report by Northeast Archaeology Research Center: [York River Headwaters Report final redacted NEARC Dec2017](#)
- Architectural history report by Groundroot Preservation Group: [Architectural Survey Upper York River GPG Nov2017](#)



to Barbara and Walter Hanson and Jeanette Paul and all our members born in January!

If you would like your special day to be included in future newsletters let me know ☺

News and Events

January 25th – Old Berwick Historical Society:

Great Works Regional Land Trust:

January 27 – Hike at Tuckahoe Preserve, Berwick

– **Due to poor snow conditions and warm weather, waterproof boots such as muck, bog, or bean boots are recommended. Bring grippers or yak trax in case of ice. Meet in parking area on Hubbard Road, 4.3 miles north of Rte 9 in Berwick center, (3.4 miles north of turn off from Rochester Road) on the left (west) side of the road. The GWRLT "Hike Today" sign will be out on the road. RSVP as numbers are limited. It's always wise to confirm date, location and footgear recommendations. Free to members, suggested donation of \$5 (\$10/family) for non-members. GPS: 887 Hubbard Road. Snow date is Jan. 28th.

February 3rd - X-SKI at Backfields Farm in Eliot

- 10am-Noon - 34 Odiorne Lane, Eliot. Join Jay Meyer as he leads skiers through the beautiful pasture and woodland of Back Fields Farm. No dogs please. Email or call 207-646-3604 to reserve a spot. Free to Great Works members, \$5/\$10 family suggested donation for non members. Day of hike phone number is 207-251-9015.

Native Pots in Colonial Houses: Trade and Exchange Between the Wampanoag and English in the Early Plymouth Colony Settlement

January 25 | 7:30 pm | Berwick Academy Arts Center



Recent archaeological excavations have recovered the first intact sections of the early-17th-century Plymouth Colony settlement in downtown Plymouth, Massachusetts. Early deposits include large numbers of Wampanoag artifacts alongside the colonial materials. Dr. David Landon describes the search for the early settlement and provides an overview of the new discoveries, with a focus on the Native pottery and English trade goods, to illustrate patterns of cultural interaction.



The Search for the Grave of Dr. Edmund Coffin

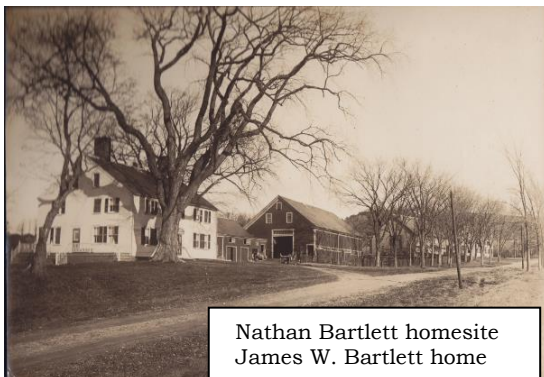
Research reaches a new level with the introduction of the internet technology both in research and the ability to communicate quickly and often in real time. What would have taken months now often takes only hours. While it does not take the place of confirming information through an actual look at primary (original) documents, it can speed up the process and lead to information much quicker than having to travel to repositories. Such is the case with a recent inquiry through our website.

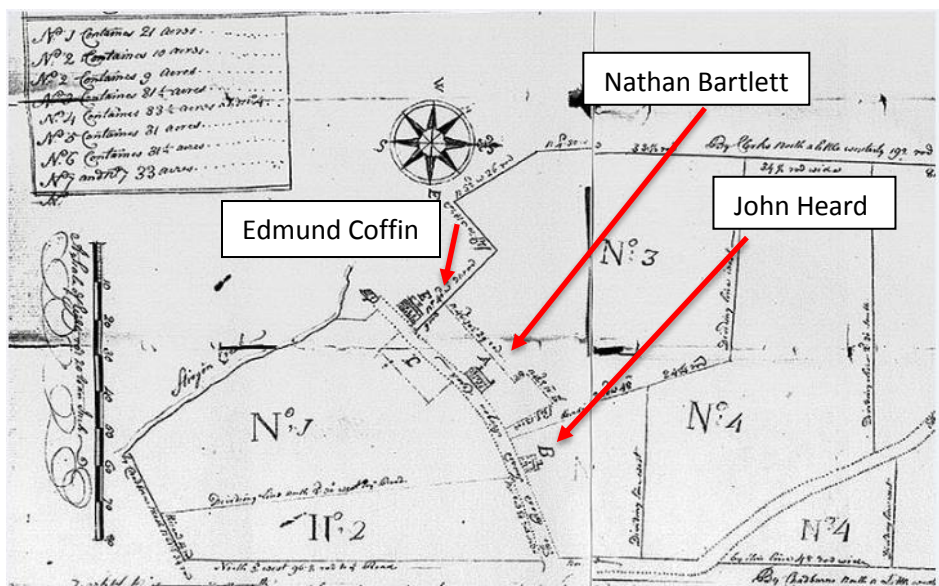
Craig Stinson, who was researching his "Coffin" ancestors, contacted the Society. In the process of writing about the five generations preceding the marriage of Dr. Edmund (1708-1789) Shuah Bartlett (1716-1803) Coffin's daughter Sarah (1740-1774) to his ancestor General James Hill of Newmarket, NH, he was looking to try and pinpoint the location of the old Bartlett homestead referred to by Willis in *Old Eliot*, as well as the home of Dr. Edmund Coffin, and the burial plots of Dr. Coffin (1708-1789) and his wife Shuah (1716-1803). Eric, Helen and I began a correspondence with Craig.

We learned from Craig that Edmund Coffin arrived in what is now Eliot around 1730. Through old deeds and the *Old Eliot* publication we learn that his house was built on land bought from his father-in-law Nathan Bartlett that originally was owned by John Heard. Society members Helen and Paul Goransson own the Sylvester Bartlett homestead which at one time sat on the site of the John Heard (1667-1752) garrison. They also, more recently, purchased part the property next door (Kay Thompson's) which was the former home of James W. Bartlett and the ancestral homestead of Captain Nathan Bartlett (1691-1775).

John Heard 1667-1752) married Phoebe Littlefield (- 1697). Phebe was one of those killed at Ambush Rock with Maj. Charles Frost. Their daughter Shuah (1694-) married Captain Nathan Bartlett (1691-1775). Another daughter Jane, interestingly enough, married Tristram Coffin of Dover, NH and Nathan and Shuah Bartlett's daughter Shuah married Dr. Edmund Coffin.

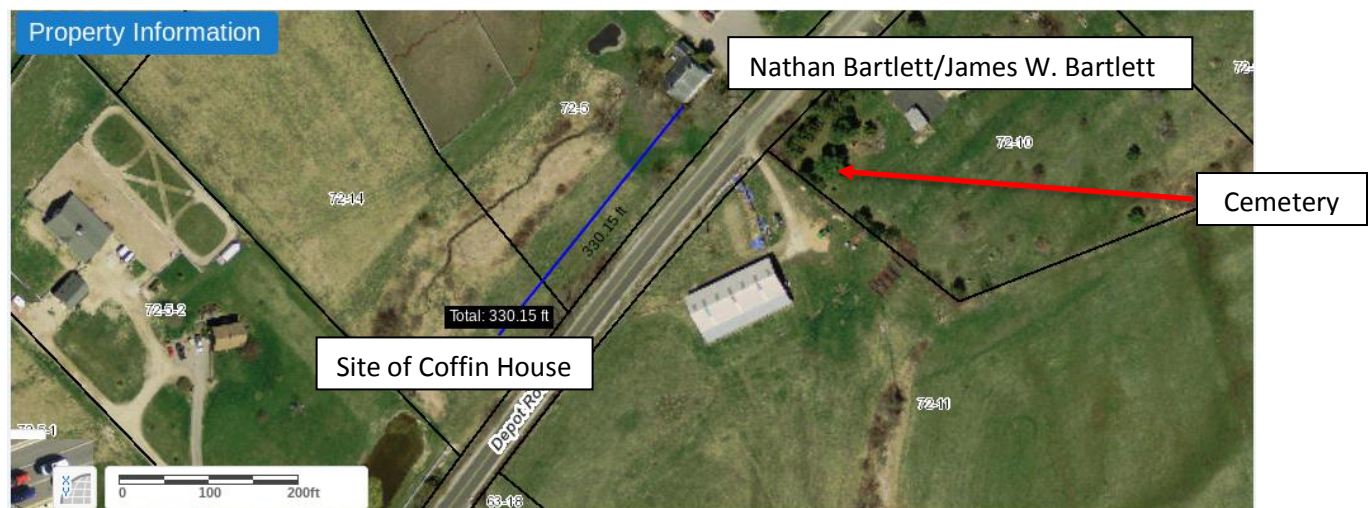
Eric and Helen worked on trying to locate the house of Dr. Coffin. In "The Physicians of Eliot" by Willis he says the Coffin house stood near the James W. Bartlett house at "the foot of the garden". This Bartlett house was the original house of Captain Nathan Bartlett and the bricks for it were made on the shores of Sturgeon Creek. The house was so damaged during an earthquake in 1736 that it was rebuilt in 1740.





Eric, using a most helpful map of lands divided to the heirs of John Heard (1752) which shows the location of the Bartlett and Coffin houses and using present-day mapping technology, was able to show where the Coffin house might have stood today. Eric determined that the distance from the James W. Bartlett house to the Coffin house was 20 rods, or 330 feet, putting the location of the Coffin house

330 feet southwest of the Bartlett house at about the same setback from the road, and, where today, there has been recent home construction.



He wondered if the excavation revealed anything interesting considering the damage that occurred in 1736 to the original brick structure. Helen told us that when they took possession of the Nathan Bartlett house and Paul was digging trenches to dry out the wet areas around the house, they came upon some bricks and rubble in the field not too far from the building. She felt that Eric's description of the Coffin house seemed to be where those bricks were found. Paul then wrote that he had been anticipating finding "a concentration of bricks because of this history. There were 1 or 2 bricks in the trench we dug up but mostly just a concentrated bunch of stones. This was clearly a man-

made deposit, but I was surprised there were not more bricks. Maybe they took those away to use in other construction”.

We were able to provide Craig with the information and pictures of the monument across the road which marks the resting place of the Bartletts and several members of his family and children of Dr. Edmund Coffin. It is often referred to in earlier references and deeds as the *Old Boulder burying ground*. A huge boulder with a bronze plaque marks this burial ground which is also mentioned in the will of John Heard Bartlett (Captain Nathan's son). At one time there may have been stones but they have long been gone. Helen surmised that Ralph Sylvester Bartlett (1868-1960) had a hand in placing this boulder to mark the graves of his ancestors which was confirmed in the writeup on Ralph S. Bartlett done in *Colonial Families of the United States, Vol VI*. In that piece it states that Ralph wrote that in the time of his youth he remembered the stones with just crude dates on them.



The inscription reads:

Erected to the memory of the following early settlers whose remains are here interred - John Heard, died 1676; his wife Isabel Heard; their sons Warwick Heard, died 1647; James Heard; Capt. John Heard, son of James 1667-1751; his wife Phebe Littlefield Heard who was killed by the Indians July 4, 1697; their daughter Dorcas Heard Tucker, born 1690, living in 1762; Capt. Nathan Bartlett 1691-1775; his wife Shuah Heard Bartlett, born 1694; four of their children and a son Nathan Bartlett 1737-1775; Sarah Shapleigh Bartlett 1738-1805; a colored servant; Shuah Coffin, born 1756; Apphia Coffin, born 1759; and four other children of Dr. Edmund Coffin who married Shuah Bartlett, daughter of Capt. Nathan Bartlett. A little northwest, one hundred and twenty five yards from this spot, stands the old Bartlett homestead built by Capt. Nathan Bartlett about 1740, where five successive generations of the Bartlett family have been born and reared. 1914

Craig believes that the unnamed children referred to on the monument are Captain Nathan and Shuah Heard Bartlett's children Nathan #1 (1720-1720), Nathan #2 (1730-1736), Sarah #1 (1735-1736) and James (1732-1738). The "four other" children of Dr. Edmund and Shuah Bartlett Coffin are probably Edward (1733-1735), John (1753-1756), Edmund (1736-1758), and Enoch (1751-1761).

The really interesting piece of Craig's query involved the location of the graves of Dr. Coffin and his wife. Eliot's Dr. J.L.M. Willis, and other writers contributing to his *Old Eliot* volumes have said that the graves of Dr. Coffin and his wife were located at this burial place in Eliot, citing it correctly near what was the Eliot railroad depot and were still visible (1908). Tristram Coffin, who wrote the genealogy/history of the Coffin family says that Edmund and Shuah died at Kittery and lists all their children as being born in Kittery. Even John Frost, later, placed them at this location and Craig thought too that they would be buried here. We all had no reason to believe otherwise, although they are not specifically listed on the monument, UNTIL Craig shared with us some pictures taken in Shapleigh, Maine showing what looked like their resting place! This cemetery was actually document by Dr. John E. Frost who also did the documentation of the private cemeteries in Eliot many years ago. There seem to be only two graves at the site which is surrounded by a nice rock wall that Craig describes as varying in height from 1-3 feet.



And so, we began to wonder about our previous information and just what might have happened. Did they die in Eliot and then their bodies and stones were moved later to Shapleigh? Was Dr. Edmund, who died in 1789, buried in Eliot and later, when his wife Shuah died in 1803, his body moved to Shapleigh? There was a mistake in the information somewhere.

The answer came when Craig found that some of Dr. Edmund and Shuah's family were shown to be living in Shapleigh, Maine, and that there were at least two references to Edmund Coffin, placing him in Shapleigh. Frederick R. Boyle in *Early Families of Shapleigh and Acton* writes that "Edmund Coffin was a physician who settled in Kittery (now Eliot) in 1730 and moved to Shapleigh early." The word "early" would then place them in Shapleigh perhaps around 1785 following the formation of the town. So far we have found Edmund's signature on documents and references which place him here in Eliot (then Kittery) until at least 1757.

Henry Sweetser Burrage writing about history of the Baptists in Maine wrote that "The church at Shapleigh was admitted to the association at this meeting in Berwick. The town of Shapleigh was incorporated under its present name in 1785. But before this time, among the first settlers, a pioneer religious work was done by Elder Tozer Lord and Mr. Abraham Pugsley, who assembled the people for public worship in barns and private houses. At length Mr. Nehemiah Davis settled in the place, and as he was accustomed to preach he took charge of the meetings. In 1787, Mr. Davis was ordained as a Baptist minister in the dwelling house of Edmund Coffin, near the corner". It is not yet clear, without researching land records if this was Dr. Edmund Coffin, or another Edmund Coffin, but most likely that it was the Doctor, based upon all the other evidence presented. Craig's research is assuredly the best that we have confirming that, indeed, the Coffin's are buried in Shapleigh, Maine and not in Eliot, as always thought. What a discovery!

In the course of the investigation Craig noted the mention of "a colored servant" on the plaque in Eliot and explained that Deacon Nathaniel Coffin (1669-1749) of Newbury paid for his son's medical training and his medicines, and gave his son Edmund "Jack, a negro man", valued at £50. He then wondered if perhaps this "colored servant" might be Jack. We contacted author and researcher Patricia Wall who responded that she knew of no Jack as mentioned in the records for the town. Craig's initial feeling gave way, after further research, to believing the person was more likely to have been Cumbo whom Patricia Wall writes about in her book Lives of Consequence as the "Negro woman of Capt. Bartlett". He based this upon what we know about Cumbo - that she was baptized in 1746 in the Congregational Church in Eliot, which would have elevated her status in the community and the placement of her name on the plaque after the Bartlett family members and before the Coffins may indicate her connection with the Bartletts and not the Coffins. On a related note Dr. Edmund Coffin cared for Joshua Black, the son of Black Will, during his last illness.

Craig has shared with us a manuscript with the results of his research which it is hoped we can share on our Society's website, in the near future.

Spinney Creek Bridge

