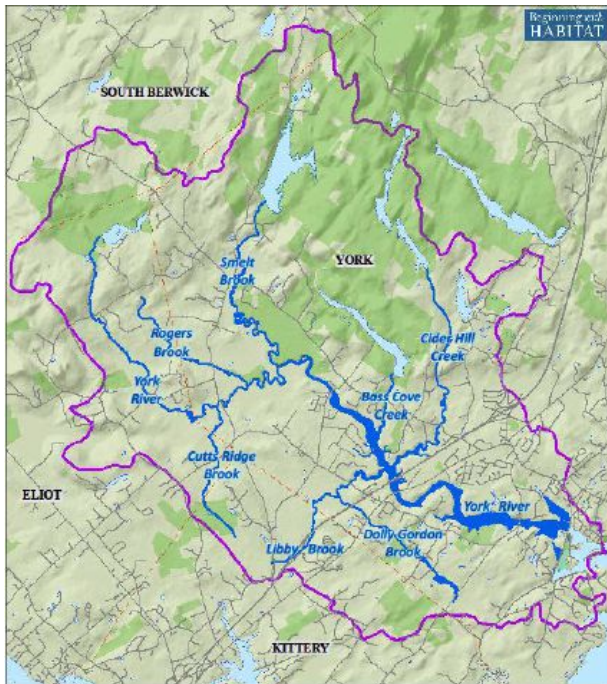


August 6th annual **Cookout** at 5:00pm at the Eliot Boat Basin. The grill will be going if you'd like to use it. You are welcome to bring something to share, if you would like. We may have a special surprise that evening so please join us and bring your friends!

NEWS

After more than 2 ½ years of work the **York River Study Committee** has issued a DRAFT Stewardship Plan, with the final plan expected this month. Based on their findings they are supporting the recommendation that the York River and its major tributaries be designated a Partnership Wild and Scenic River (PWSR). They have concluded that the interconnections of the lands and rivers in this watershed contribute to the many values that make it special. This designation would be accompanied by annual funding from the National Park Service to a local watershed committee to carry out its stewardship plan. A PWSR designation expressly prohibits the National Park Service from owning land or imposing any land use regulations on watershed lands as a result of the designation.



The Stewardship Plan includes the natural, cultural, historic, economic resources of the watershed, along with other values important to community character. The Plan is advisory and identifies

AGING IN PLACE SURVEY

The *Aging in Place Committee* is asking for your help in accessing the needs of our citizens to help make Eliot a more age-friendly place to live. Residents of all ages, as well as those over 50 are asked to participate!

The survey focuses on aspects of the community that are important for the health and well-being of older residents and might help us all as we age or age-in-place in Eliot.

"Your opinions will help us learn about the strength of Eliot and will help us identify opportunities for improvement as we build an age-friendly community."

Surveys are available at the town hall and from an on-line link from the town website at eliotmaine.org.

The Committee meets the second Tuesday of each month from 1-2:30pm, to which everyone is invited. Minutes and videos of each meeting are available on the town's website.

recommendations and actions intended to maintain watershed values and resources for future generations.

Each watershed community must decide (1) whether to adopt the designation of a Partnership Wild and Scenic River for the York River and (2) whether to adopt the plan. It is anticipated that these questions will be on the November ballot.

The draft Stewardship Plan is available for review at the YRSC website: <http://www.yorkrivermaine.org/> and at the Eliot Town Hall.

A Partnership Wild and Scenic River designation will help communities continue to protect the many river-related values and resources in the York River watershed that are important to the region's character, quality of life, and economy.



The **Open House** weekends at the # **8 Schoolhouse** are going exceptionally well. Despite an unusually hot June weekend we had over 30 people come in to visit. Most were local residents who shared their own memories as they

OPEN HOUSE
JULY 28 – JULY 29
11AM – 2PM
#8 SCHOOLHOUSE
GREENWOOD STREET



looked around at the pictures of people and schoolhouses. Many expressed interest and so our program for October will be centered around memories of Eliot. People will be invited to come and share their own memories, identify pictures and share in exploring

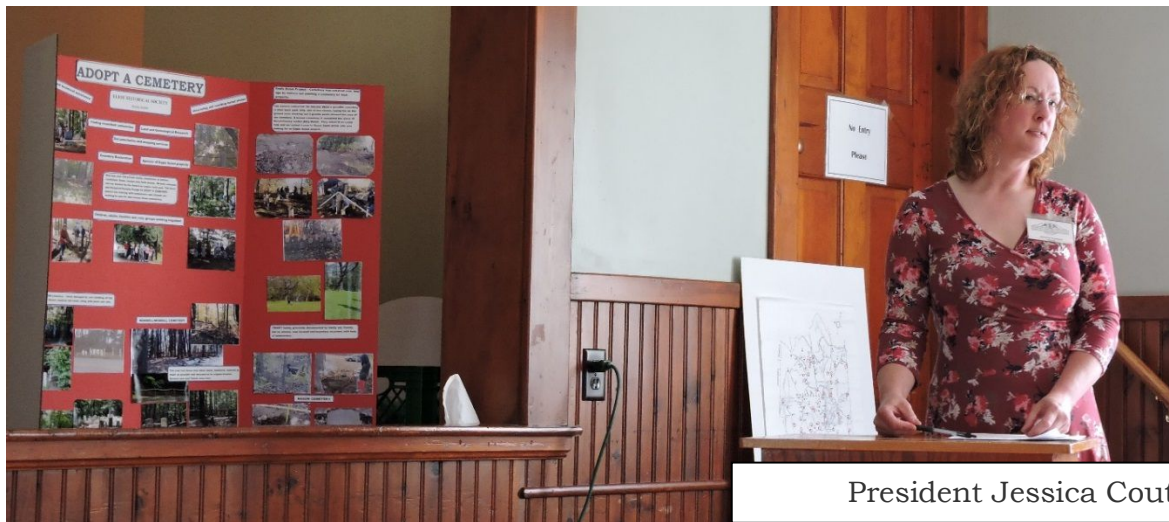


the history of our town. Several mentioned things that they intend to give to the Society to add to our collection. The highlight of the weekend was the visit of Jeanette Paul with her sister and family from Florida. Jeanette enjoyed giving them a tour of the building which reminded us of how much we miss Jeanette during our 2nd grade class visits.



In May, Bob and I attended the annual spring **Maine Old Cemetery Association (MOCA) meeting** held in Waterboro at the old Waterboro Grange Hall No, 432, which is now the home of the Waterborough Historical Society. A classic 1950s community hall, with the dwindling of the Grange membership the building was sold to the Historical Society for \$1 plus the costs of associated legal paperwork.

We brought with us a display of EHS's **ADOPT A CEMETERY** program with pictures of our various projects and findings along with the record books that are kept on each cemetery which includes town maps showing parcels and each private cemetery, pictures of the cemetery and each of the stones, as well as before and after cleaning pictures and information on the people buried there. We also had brochures for people to take. The display was featured prominently on the stage, right next to the podium! Bob and I answered many questions about the project and several people who were interested in starting something themselves in their town.



One of the slate stones found in Maine that bears a coffin motif. The motif on this marker, found at Middle Range Pond Cemetery in Poland, was carved in 1807 by Alpheus Cary, one of the workers in Bartlett Adams' Portland shop. The deceased is Dr. Nathaniel Morrill, who was killed by an unruly ox. Other icons on this stone include the masonic star and rising sun. On many masonic markers, the "G" is found within the compass and square and translates to "G is for Geometry, the noblest of sciences." On this marker, since the G appears on the coffin itself, it could mean God.

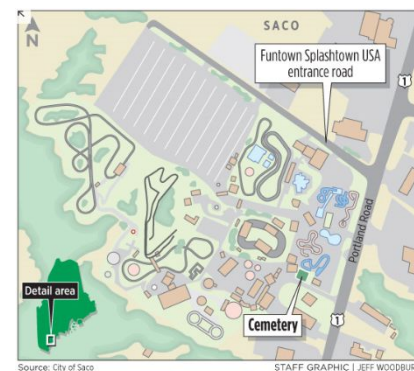
Photo and description courtesy of Ron Romano.



Ron Romano who has written about the gravestone carver Bartlett Adams and Portland's historic Eastern Cemetery was the guest speaker. His topic *A Needle in a Haystack: Finding images of coffins on early gravestones in Maine*, was very interesting. He talked about his search and showed us the two markers he has found, both dating to 1807.

James Pate of the Dennett, Craig and Pate Funeral Home took us through his participation in the removal of bodies from an old

cemetery in Saco to make room for the waterslide at Splashtown in 2011. His 'adventure' began when a family member, who lived out of town visited the family cemetery in 2006, only to discover that Splashtown was in the midst of erecting a waterslide that was within 10 feet of the cemetery and actually went over the cemetery.



Over the years it seems the park had grown and gradually encroached upon the 150-year-old cemetery. In the course of investigating the exact extent of the cemetery it was found that the excavation was within inches of graves. The owner, who hired a lawyer, worked out the details with the waterpark and using ground penetrating radar to locate the graves and careful exhumation, in the end the bodies of 17 people were moved to Laurel Cemetery where their graves are now marked by new stones.



Membership to Maine Old Cemetery Association is \$5 a year, \$20 for five years or \$100 for a life membership sent to MOCA, PO Box 641, Augusta, ME 04332-0641.

After lunch we visited the old Town House Cemetery located in back of the town hall. In honor of the coming Memorial Day Angela Tibbetts of the Waterboro Cemetery Committee shared with us stories about the lives of some of the veterans buried there and prominent families of the town. In this cemetery are several examples of gravestones made out of soapstone, something we had not seen before in the many cemeteries we have been in.



**SEACOAST DELEGATION HONORS ORR’S ISLAND
18th CENTURY PIONEER**

As Maine prepares to celebrate the 200th anniversary of its separation from Massachusetts and the city of Portsmouth was in the midst of the “Juneteenth” observance and celebration, a group from Eliot, Berwick, and Exeter, NH travelled to Orr’s Island to join with members of the Black family of Harpswell, Maine and friends to commemorate one of Maine’s earliest African American communities and its 18th century founding family, that of William Black, Jr., aka, “Will Black”, Jr. Ceremonies took place in the Community Memorial Garden of the Captain Morrill House owned by Steven and his brother Ralph (Chip) Black, who also hosted the event.





Descendants and friends from the area were joined by author Patricia Q. Wall whose recently published book “Lives of Consequence” was the catalyst for the event. Her research shed light on the life of slave, Black Will, who lived with the family of Nicholas Shapleigh in what is now Eliot, Maine and his son Will, Jr.

The events planned for the day brought recognition and honor to Will Black, Jr. and his family. His father, Black Will, was a slave in the household of Nicholas Shapleigh in Kittery (now Eliot) in the late 1600s. Participants learned how

Black Will rose from being an enslaved man to a landholder; ultimately gaining his freedom and of the journey of his son Will, Jr. to his new home in Harpswell, Maine. Born 1690 of a law-prohibiting relationship between his father, the enslaved Black Will (owned by Nicholas Shapleigh of Kittery, Maine) and a white woman, Alice Hanscom, Will, Jr. was considered free under his mother’s status. His father had been able to buy, for himself, 100 acres of land in Kittery (now Eliot) Maine while still a slave to the Shapleigh family. He also provided for the emancipation of his friend Tony and a piece of his land for his friend to live on. Gradually an African-American community gathered on and around these lands. It is believed that Black Will has earned the distinction to being the only slave to have owned his own land in what is now the State of Maine.

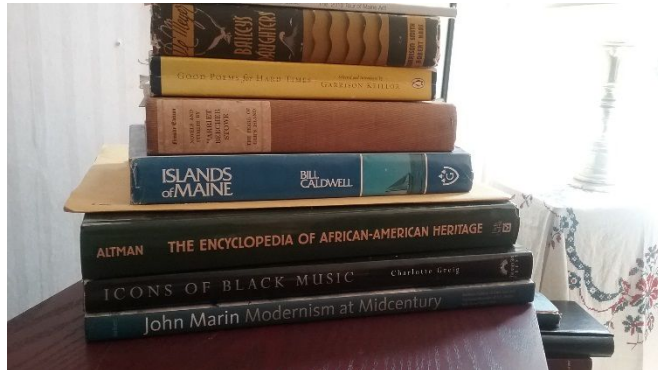


Will

Black, Jr. succeeded, for a while, in becoming a small property owner in the region, but racism eventually became a daunting presence in his personal, social, and business life, which may have led to his decision - sometime after his father died in 1727 - to sell off his property in Berwick, Maine and move his wife and son, William, 3rd, to the forested wilderness of Downeast Maine. Will, Jr. first settled on what became known as Will’s Island

(later, Bailey Island) and then, possibly in the late 1740s, either willingly or by eviction Will moved just north to settle on Orr’s Island where some of his descendants still reside today.

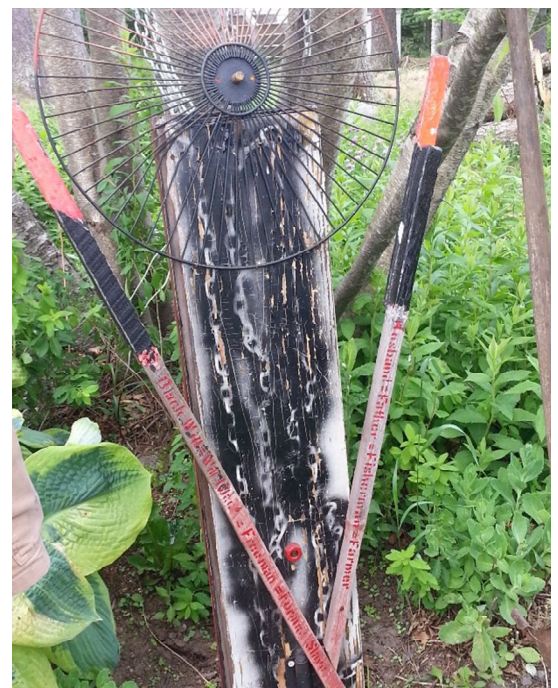
At the moment, the only permanent, public reminder of founder, William Black, Jr., is a navigational chart notation of the waterway, “Will’s Gut,” which streams with the tide under Cribstone Bridge connecting Orr’s and Bailey’s Islands.



Stephen Black speaking about the meaning behind the day’s events said “ I trace my interest in human rights and issues of social and economic justice to learning as a child growing up on Orr’s and Bailey Islands that slavery also had its own connections to New England; that a man of “swarthy complexion” (Will Black Jr.) could be evicted from “his island” by what might have been manipulation of the judicial system; that class divisions

based on income and privilege live on in various forms within our minds and institutions; that the destruction of the mixed-race community on Malaga Island by the State of Maine in 1912 has echoes in our current society in our disregard for the poor and underserved; that antisemitism was a written policy at the girls’ summer camp on Orr’s Island; that the anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant fervor of the KKK in Maine in the 1920’s was also shared by my own paternal great grandfather; that the home I lived in as a Brunswick High School exchange student to Germany in the 1960’s had been “legally acquired” after the expulsion, deportation and murder of its Jewish inhabitants during the Holocaust; and finally that it is incumbent upon all citizens in a democracy to speak up for and take action to protect the rights of all disadvantaged and targeted minorities.

“I am inspired by the work of so many individuals and groups who champion the rights of the “underdog”. Will Black’s legacy can serve us as a reminder of the courage and determination required to overcome personal and social obstacles. His legacy is one of opposing limitations on personal freedom, of helping another enslaved person buy his freedom from slavery and ignoring the laws and conventions that prohibited a man of color from marriage or to a lighter-skinned European woman. As Patricia Wall has written in her excellent book, Lives of Consequence, Will Black was “a star” worthy of learning about and celebrating.”



BLACK WILL = WILL BLACK = FREEMAN = FORMER SLAVE
HUSBAND = FATHER = FISHERMAN = FARMER



Preceding the dedication of markers in the Community Memorial Garden a luncheon was held, followed by a panel discussion which was filmed for the local TV community access channel. It focused on the research done by Patricia Wall, Rosanne Fisher of Eliot, Maine, Paul Boisvert of Berwick, Maine who discovered that part of his lands had once belonged to Will Black, Jr., and Gerry York, an

Orr's Island historian. Stephen Black moderated the discussion which focused on slavery in southern Maine during the colonial era under the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and what has been discovered about the life of Black Will, his son while in Berwick and later their settlement on Bailey and Orr's Island.

Simple black and white, artistic markers were then placed for the father Black Will and Harpswell pioneers William Black, Jr., his son William 3rd. Near Will, Jr.'s marker was placed a beach stone brought from Bailey Island in remembrance of their life there and where he and his wife Elizabeth lie in unmarked graves.



Also recognized on this day were the women of the family - Alice, Elizabeth, Elizabeth Turbet, Mary, and Sarah who faced their lives with great strength and resolve as white women in a highly charged era.



The most meaningful moment for the Black family members came when two small samples of soil, one from Black Will's farm in Eliot, Maine and one from Will, Jr.'s former property in Berwick, Maine, were commingled with soil from his Orr's Island property and buried with the planting of a lilac bush in the Community Memorial Garden.



Family members in attendance included, Stephen, Annika, Tim, and Ralph Black, Gerald York, and Faith Woodman. Friends and visitors

included Mr. and Mrs. Paul Boisvert, Rosanne and Robert Fisher, Patricia Q. Wall, and Nola Denslow. The day's activities concluded with a tour of Bailey and Orr's Island to places related to Will Black, Jr.'s family and a dinner at Cundy's Harbor. Plans are in the works to make this an annual event. - Patricia Q. Wall and Rosanne Adams



Group at Mackerel Cove, Bailey Island, where it is believed Will Black, Jr. lived. Paul Boisvert, Pat Wall, Rosanne Fisher, Pat Boisvert, Faith Woodward, Gerry York, Nola Denslow, Steve Black, Robert Fisher

AREA EVENTS

JULY – OCTOBER: Scheduled walking tours of Portland's historic **Eastern Cemetery**, founded in 1668, occur July through October: 11am on Saturdays, Wednesdays, Sundays and 5:30pm on Thursdays. These tours, which last up to an hour, are led by trained volunteers, who cover the cemetery's history, prominent historical figures, and early gravestone art. They leave from the Congress Street gate. Ticket info: \$10 adults, \$5 students and seniors (65+), kids under 12 are free. <http://spiritalive.org/tours/index.htm>

July 14: Family Fun Day, 1-4pm, at the Counting House Museum. Sponsored by the Old Berwick Historical Society. Children of all ages are invited to make crafts inspired by colonial and Native American life in the 1700's. Admission is free. Donation gratefully accepted.

July 20-23: Maine Old Cemetery Association's Cemetery Preservation Beginner's Workshop -Woodbine Cemetery, Ellsworth, ME - This workshop will teach the skills need for gravestone preservation through hands-on experience – how to properly clean and repair, straighten, and reset gravestones as well as building and rebuilding bases and using a tripod for resetting monuments. Registration required. At the time of this printing there were only 4 spaces left. Go to <https://moca-me.org/event-2958405/Registration>



July 27-29: Annual Antique Tractor and Engine Show at Raitt Farm, State Road. Lots of things to see and do for young and old! \$7 entry, children 12 and under FREE.