

**Meeting, March 2<sup>nd</sup>**, 7:00 pm, John F. Hill Grange Hall, State Road. Our program will be - *Hawthorne's Eliot Inspiration - The Life of Mary Bachiler in -Puritan Maine*. Two hundred years before Nathaniel Hawthorne published his famous novel, "The Scarlet Letter", the original inspiration for his story lived a tumultuous life in a part of Kittery which became Eliot. Mary Beadle Bachiler, the fourth wife of Rev. Stephen Bachiler and 60 years his junior was described as "beautiful as dawn." She made a remarkable recovery from public humiliation in 1651 when she was convicted of adultery to earning the distinction as being the only woman to sign the Submission of Maine to Massachusetts at William Everett's Tavern in 1652, having been granted land in Kittery in 1648. Researcher and writer Eric Christian will explore the life of this interesting pioneer, wife, and mother as we uncover one of the many interesting stories of Maine's early settlement.

### **Meeting Notes and News**

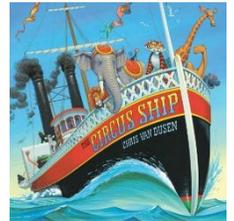
**Pam Ashley** and **Robert Fisher** were the happy recipients of Doris Grover's homemade fudge at our January meeting! Tracey Graffam-Dixon donated some homemade soap for another raffle which was won by **Pam Ashley**! Congratulations to our winners and a HUGE thank you to **Doris Grover** for her continued support.

Recent additions to our Historical Society Collection include children's clothing, dolls, and other toys from **David and Marion Raitt**.

## **Eliot Maine Bicentennial Committee**

**March 1<sup>st</sup> is Eliot's Birthday!** On this day in 1810 we separated from our mother town of Kittery and went on our own.

**March 10 & 11** - Maine author **Chris Van Dusen** will be reading his book **Circus Ship** to the children at the Elementary School, more in our next newsletter.



**March 14<sup>th</sup> a Community Bean Supper** will be held at the United Methodist Church, 4-6pm. Donation only dinner.

**March 16** – A celebration of **MAINE'S BIRTHDAY** will be held at Eliot Elementary School at 2pm. All are invited to the festivities.

**March 22 –MAINE MAPLE SUGAR SUNDAY**

In December **Cathryn Schuber** of Eliot brought in a very interesting object which she had found on the shore of her waterfront property. She surmised that it might be some kind of brickmaking stamp because of the historical brickyards that were located in the area. A member of our society, who had family members who were fisherman felt that it was a marking tool for lobster fisherman. The number would be the fisherman license # and he



would mark his buoys and pots with this too. Cathryn said she would do some more research, hopefully identify the fisherman and then come back and make a presentation to the society on what she is able to discover about it.

Did you know that back when the B&M Railroad went through Eliot that there was a bridge at Gould's Corner that went over the track? We recently had a query from Chris Mac that led Eric and I to take another look. He and Chris, using the old pictures and descriptions were able to determine where the bridge was located. We don't have a good picture of the bridge but this one is taken from the bridge looking southwest down what is now Route 236. At least two of our members know where the bridge was. One of them says she and some other kids used to take pennies and put them on the tracks there under the bridge and also used to buy cigarettes at Day's Store, which was nearby, and go under the bridge and smoke! My, my, the things we learn about!



The Society was notified that it has been chosen by the **Seacoast Repertory Theatre** as one of their **2020 Community Partners!** That means that we will receive 10 tickets to each of their 9 main stage shows this coming season that can be used as part of our fundraising efforts! A thank you to **Helen Goransson**, our grant-writing person, who alerted us to this and applied for us! We have a wonderful opportunity to support the Seacoast Rep while adding to our fundraising possibilities!

**REMINDER – IT'S A NEW YEAR – DUES are DUE NOW!**

For those of us who are not lifetime members, the dues are **\$10 per year for an individual or \$20 for a family.** You may mail a check to **Sylvia Moynihan, 1471 State Road, Eliot, ME 03903**

**Kennebunk Savings Bank** recently awarded the Eliot Historical Society a *Community Promise Grant*. The monies will be used to mount a 12-foot canvas mural of the clipper ship *Nightingale* that, at one time, graced the wall of the home of Eliot school teacher Esther Morrow, who commissioned the painting.

Painted by local artist Gordon Carlisle, the *Nightingale* mural will be placed in the **Eliot Elementary School during the celebration of Maine's Bicentennial on March 16<sup>th</sup> at 2PM.** All are invited to the celebration!

*Sundance Sign Company* of Dover, NH is handling the mounting and installation.



## Area Events

**February 20** – *Visualizing Maine: Postcard History* - 7:30pm. Berwick Academy Arts Center. Illustrated lecture that discusses the role of postcards in understanding Maine's rich history and culture during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dr. Libby Bischof. Old Berwick Historical Society program. [www.oldberwick.org](http://www.oldberwick.org).



## UNCOVERING THE PAST WEBSITE QUERIES

### THE MINISTRY LANDS

Continuing with our website queries.... Another very interesting email came this past year from a man, now living in Sun City West, Arizona. Dan Luparello wrote to us about a find on his property in the 1970s. He was putting in a swimming pool and discovered a grave and cemetery. He was aware that this cemetery was mentioned in the deeds for his property which stated " an ancient cemetery approximately 100 feet square" but was surprised when he accidentally dug up a skeleton that was about 3-4 feet down. The skeleton had an artifact located at its breast, which was conical shaped, made of rolled copper and about 1-2 inches in length. There was also a piece of flagstone approximately 1 foot by 2 feet lying flat, about 1 foot under the ground and place just about over the skeleton's head.

His own research and interest in Indian gravesites in southern New England and similar artifacts in Indian museums throughout the east coast that he had seen and with what he had found being close to the Piscataqua led him to believe it may have been an Indian camp area and possibly was an ancient Indian burial ground.

As he continued to clear the land of brush in the immediate area of the grave, he found it interesting that he kept turning up rounded rocks with one flat side and a discernible carved "X". There were about 10-15 stones in all.

At the time of the finding, in 1971, he informed the University of Maine, showed initial interest but after waiting months he decided to replace the artifact, as he had found it, and then covered the skeleton back up.

I immediately contacted Tad Baker about the discovery. His initial comments were that he didn't think he had ever found a Native American burial ground referenced in a Maine deed. He wrote that *"...certainly the 100' x 100' dimensions suggest a substantial European cemetery (as does use of the word cemetery itself). In looking back at the 17<sup>th</sup> century deeds for this area, I can't find any mention of the cemetery, but can't do a complete title search without going to the courthouse at Alfred"*.

*"Back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many homesteads in York County had family or neighborhood burial grounds. Today they are very hard to spot, because they only have very small fieldstones marking most burials – some with a mark or initial on them. The larger piece of flagstone you mention is probably slate, which would probably mark an 18<sup>th</sup> century grave. It is also interesting that this is at the back of the lot – near the property line. In this deed, there is reference to the "ancient line of division of Athorne land... So, that back line is an old property line. I find that cemeteries are often just on one side of a property line or the other, as they often served as burial grounds for neighboring families"*.

As for the conical metal items Tad suspected that the rolled copper was likely a "tinkling cone," bits of adornment worn on buckskin fringe. *"You would have a few of them together which would tinkle when you moved. While mostly associated with Native American attire, I would not be shocked to see them worn by early English settlers as well"*. Tad then reached out to Dr. Arthur Spiess of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and Dr. Stefan Claesson, an historical archaeologist who lives in Eliot. [as of this time we have not heard back from either]

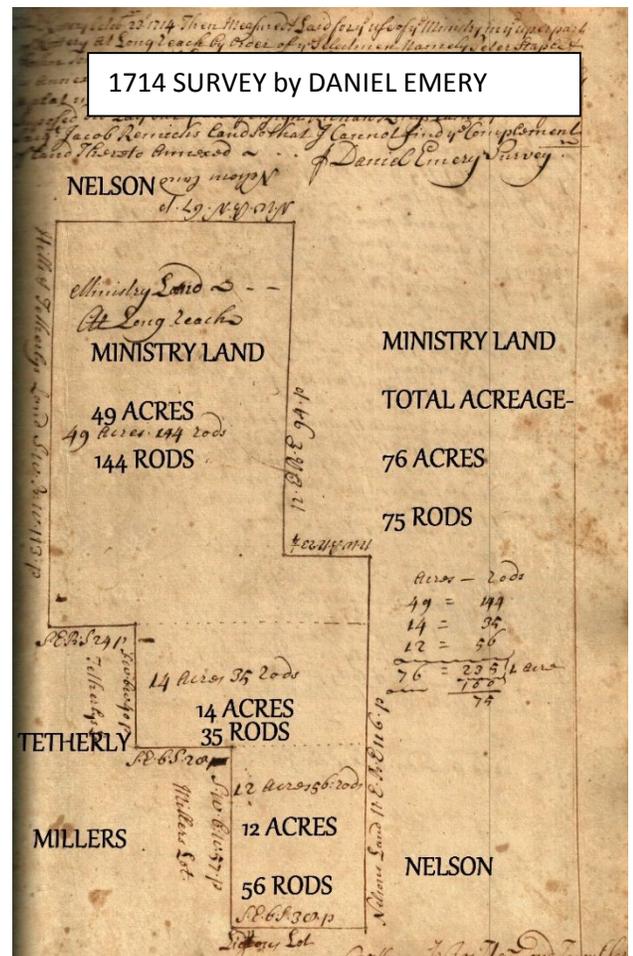
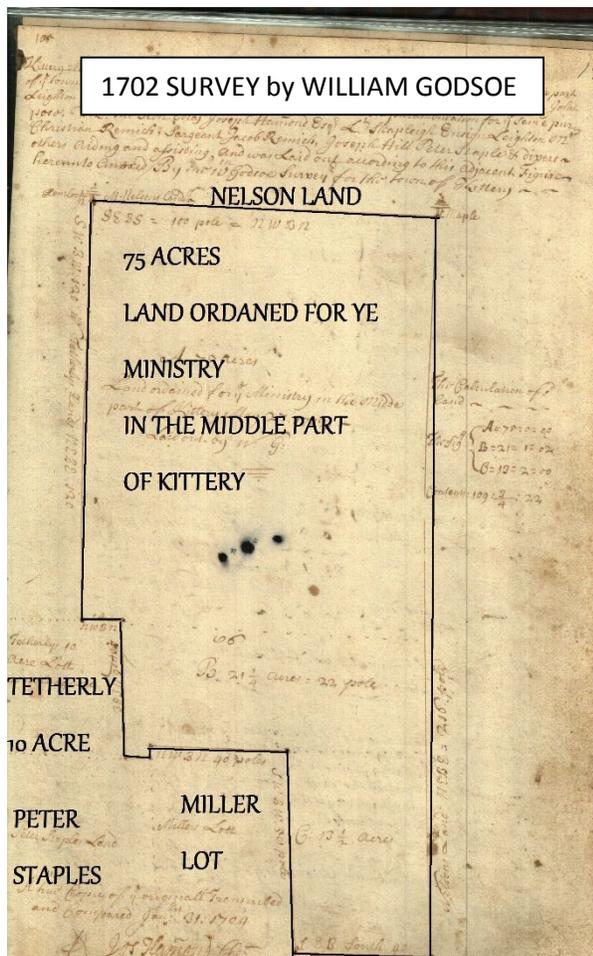
**By the 1600's Native Americans of the Northeast had acquired a wealth of knowledge for working European sheet metals which was no doubt combined with experience in indigenous copper before contact. Even the tiniest pieces and scraps of copper and brass were recycled. Native Americans of New England mastered techniques of cutting, drilling, etching, forming, joining, and decorating indigenous and European sheet metal.**



Mr. Luparello offered to draw up a small map to show where he remembered the grave to be and, if he could now find them, two photos he took of the skeleton back in 1971 before he closed up the grave again. While we were waiting for the drawing, Tad, Eric, and I continued to research the area going

back into the 1600s. Tad shared an article he had found in OLD ELIOT Volume 1 no. V, May, 1897 by Francis Keefe, titled “Some of the Earliest Dwellers on the Long Reach of the Piscataqua.” He wrote, “It discusses the location of the earliest meetinghouse in Eliot in the vicinity of the property line between Joseph Hill and Peter Staples Jr. The article goes on to say “we are told that the earliest parish Burying Ground is in this locality – and there are perhaps a hundred graves – all without headstones.” Tad noted that at least the headstone stones were gone by 1897 and that it might well be the cemetery referenced in the article as “you could easily bury “perhaps a hundred” people in a 100’ x 100’ plot”. [100 square feet are ¼ of an acre]

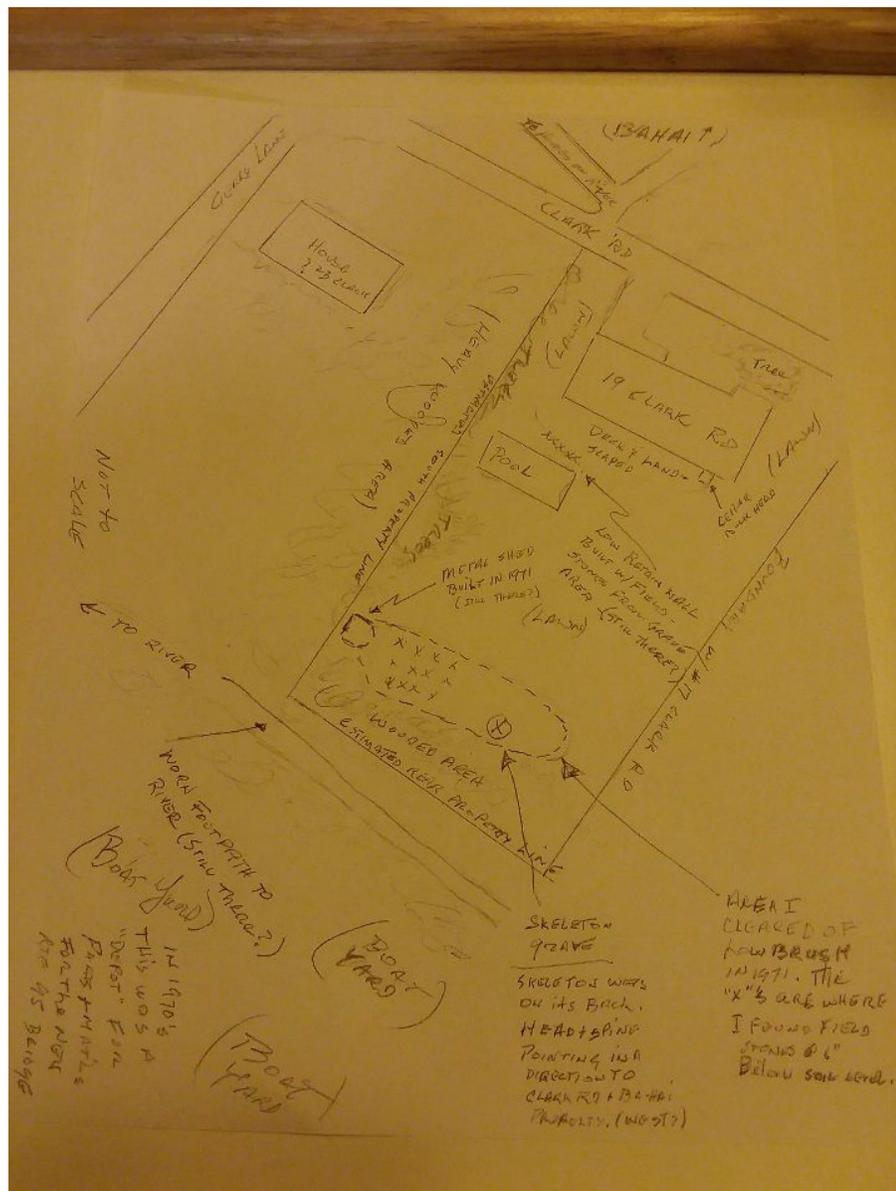
There is a well-known marker in the vicinity located at the corner of Main and Greenwood Streets denoting “The Church in the Woods”. The marker reads “17 rods southwest of this spot was built the first meeting house in Eliot, 1699-1732”. A 1702 survey, and a 1714 corrective survey, found in the Kittery Town Records showed the ministry lands and those of Peter Staples which helped to place the general location today.



Going further, Eric could find no references as to what happened to those early ministry lands and mused, *“It would be interesting to see the deeds of that era, and especially after they abandoned this brand-new meeting house and parsonage for the one built further north on the Leighton lands. If they had already established a parish burying ground at Long Reach, it seems strange that it would be forgotten if it possibly contained 100's of burials. The burying grounds can be located quite a distance from the meeting houses as witnessed by the parish burying ground on River Road, quite a walk from where the meeting house stood at Cram's Corner”.*

Further researched revealed that Mr. Luparello’s land was one of three pieces of a larger lot that had been split into house lots in 1966. The three pieces each had a reference to the cemetery in their deeds. A friend of Bob Fisher, who owned one of those pieces, had told him there was a cemetery in his backyard, but he hadn’t found it. This friend didn’t realize it was part of a larger parcel and so for years it baffled us as to the cemetery’s location.

The plot map and pictures arrived. Mr. Luparello wrote that he remembered that the area was in front of a metal shed he had erected on the rear of the lot on the river side. It was built on concrete blocks, so no ground was disturbed at the time. He wrote, *“Perhaps it covered more graves. The grave I dug up was the farthest from the shed and I am thinking that with the flat flagstone as a marker, the person was likely someone of importance? How I happened to hit it dead-center, is a mystery to me to this day. My shovel hit the skull, and I uncovered the skeleton down to waist area...no arms, no ribs, but only clavicles, and the copper artifact. Must say*



*that the whole episode haunted me for rest of the time I lived there. Every time I walked back to the house from the shed, especially at dusk, I had a penchant of looking over my shoulder.*

Mr. Luparello wrote, *"The photos, unfortunately are not very good and suffer the 50 years since taking them. The skeleton was uncovered to about its waist; but the skull cannot be clearly seen. The other photo shows the skull more clearly and shows the "hole" in the skull made accidentally by my shovel. Besides the skull and the spine, the only other bones I saw were the clavicles, and the "rolled copper" artifact in the spine area. I suppose that if I had dug further, the leg bones would have been visible, but I saw no reason to do so.*

*The body had been laid out with the head to the Northwest following the approximate line of the Piscataqua River at that point, also pointing towards the south end of the house and towards Clark Road". [The photos were very poor and so have not been replicated here.]*

*Notice on the river side of the property, about midway down that property line, there is a slight "outcropping" of the tree line. Going down this line there is a small shed building which I installed in 1971. It was this area in the front of the shed (dotted lines) that I cleared of low brush and grass in hopes of preparing a garden area. I turned over about 10 or so field stones, mostly flat on one side and mostly with an "X" or "cross" etched on the flat side. Not thinking about them, they were included in a small retaining wall just above the pool between the south end of the house and the pool.*

*Since burning was not an option in those days, I decided to bury some of the cleared vegetation. Hence, I moved down the line away from the shed and the cleared area that was to be a garden, and started digging a trench for the cleared brush. Less than 1 foot down, struck a 1'x2' piece of slate at lying at an angle in the soil. About 2' below that I stuck the skull dead center with the shovel. Notified the Univ of Maine and they expressed interest and said they would send some. I covered the hole with a heavy piece of plywood. After not hearing from anyone for 4-6 weeks, I refilled the grave. After about 3 months, U of ME showed up but left when I told them we'd have to dig the grave up again. C'est la Vie."*

Mr. Luparello's Eliot episode stayed with him all these years and stoked what turned out to be a life-long interest in the early American history of the Seacoast area. He later moved to Connecticut and then up north to Kingston, NH, where he became head of the Kingston Historical Museum. The information will be shared with the present owner and put in touch with Mr. Luparello and the town planning department has been given the information and research that has been done so far. If anyone else has some information please let us know. Another very interesting mystery and piece of our history.

- Rosanne