

ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Minutes Of The Meeting - May 6, 2019

President Paul Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PROGRAM - Program Chairwoman Carolyn Bogh introduced our speaker for the evening, Claire Virginia Bloom. Bloom retired from the U.S. Navy in 1998 after a successful career. Her last assignment was Second in Command of the USS Constitution, aka Old Ironsides, the Navy's three mast square rigged sailing ship in Boston, Massachusetts. Bloom is the first woman to have served in this capacity.

She explained that after U.S. independence from England in 1776 our country had to have money and began to trade, sell and buy goods from around the world. In order to do that we needed ships. As our trade developed with other countries far from home our ships were attacked and pillaged by pirates. Our Navy was established to counter these attacks by building six ships. The Navy continued to grow and develop after this.

There were 52 guns on the Constitution in total with the smaller guns on the top deck so they could fire on the masts of attacking ships and the longer barrel guns were located below so they could fire on the haul.

The Crew was assigned quarters according to seniority. The Captain and senior officers were in more private spaces while the enlisted men were quartered below in a common area in hammocks while the 50 "Powder Monkeys" aged 11 - 14 years old were on the bottom part of the ship. It was the duty of young boys to carry the kegs of gunpowder to the guns. All but the young boys were given a daily ration of grog, rum mixed with water, to prevent them from hoarding the rum.

The Navy stopped sailing the Constitution in 1881 and it gradually deteriorated. It was the only built to survive. A four year overhaul was done from 1992 and finished in 1996 for our country's Bicentennial. Needless to say, an enormous amount of work was done to get it back into sailing shape. The outside walls are 21" thick of white oak, live oak in the middle. The rigging had to be replaced. The keel is the only original portion of the ship. New sails had to be made - the main sail is as big as a basketball court and weighs 1200 lbs.

The actual day of the sailing in the summer of 1996 was a glorious, beautiful day. Commander Beck had the privilege of sailing her out. They were accompanied by two other Navy ships, the Coast Guard's Eagle and Bounty, as well as tug boats. There were Security, Support, Media Relations teams on board plus 50 civilians added to the ship to maintain and sail. These people were selected on a lottery basis. There were also 4000 other boats on the water that day. After 116 years, it was a great come-back!!!

After our break for refreshments, Paul called our business meeting to order.

Secretary's Report: Polly McDonough read the minutes of the April meeting in the absence of

Tracy Graffam. It was accepted with no corrections.

Treasurer's Report: Pam Ashley presented the Treasurer's report which was accepted with no corrections.

Correspondence: Helen Sullivan had nothing to report.

Membership: Silvia Moynihan had nothing to report.

Program: Carolyn Bogh: The June meeting will be devoted to a tribute to "Jeannette Paul".

Publicity: Carolyn Bogh: Carolyn would like to know if there is anything that should be published regarding Jeannette's program - How will the evening be planned so she could publish something?

Collections: Julie Johnson: Zip Zamarkki met with Norman Vetter who gave the Society several boxes of books and other papers. Julie hasn't had a chance to look through them all yet.

Building: Paul would like a clean-up crew to work around the Grange Thursday morning: Zip, Denny, Jack, Skip and Paul volunteered.

Fund Raising: Cindy Lentz had nothing to report.

Education: Jan Serabona: The breakfast went very well with the school children and was enjoyed by all. The display at the Elementary School on teachers Florence Trefethen and Florence Moulton is going well. It's getting a lot of attention, lots of parents seeing it.

The school children loved the children's clothes and Jeannette Raitt gave Jan some more clothes that will be used at some time in the future.

Copies of the invitation for the Children's program are ready for Thursday in the Elementary School Gym at 5:30 p.m. to look at the work they have done. The program starts at 6:00 p.m. There will be an interpretative performance, songs and the new display.

Old Business

2020 Celebration - In going through pictures we found pictures of Florence Trefethen during the 150th town celebration and Florence Moulton in the 175th celebration. Pictures of the 150th Out House Float were also found. They are considering doing a similar float for the 2020 celebration.

Cindy Lentz suggested anyone who would like to share stories, pictures, poems, letters and other remembrances of Jeannette, bring them to the meeting in June to share with the group.

On Saturday, June 15th, at 11 o'clock a plaque will be presented at the School House in Jeannette's honor. Her family is invited to come and share any thoughts or comments with us. Refreshments will be served.

New Business

A model of the Trolley Stop made by Don Webber, Sr. was on display at the meeting. Paul has had a plaque made to be presented on loan at a meeting with Robert Sapero at the Ba Jai School at Green Acre, where the actual Trolley Stop is on Main St. Paul, Don Webber and Roseanne will be there. Anyone else who would like to attend is welcome. That will be done sometime this week.

Private Cemeteries of Eliot - Paul said it would be a good service for the Society to send out letters to the 165 people in Eliot who have private cemeteries on their land asking them if they know the rights and responsibilities for their care. An information packet would be included in this mailing giving points of contact for help, how to clean the stones, problems with broken or overturned stones, the basic do's and don'ts. Roseanne is checking with the State to see what information they might have which could be passed on to the home owners.

Roseanne had a cemetery story to tell. A question about William Furbish who had a cellar hole back in the 1899-1900 on his property which was seen and also a graveyard with 30 stones in it. A woman from Virginia, a descendent, got in touch with the web-site recently. She came to Eliot this week. Eric and Roseanne did some research and Eric was able to determine where that foundation might be. They contacted the current owner who did not know about the foundation but he did know about the cemetery. Carol Zamarchi knew about the cemetery. Roseanne said this is an 1800th century cemetery. Five generations of the Furbish family members are buried there. William was a POW who had fought and was captured in the Battle of Dunbar, in Scotland. He was sent to England and then over here to work in The Great Works factories (South Berwick). The current owners of the property are very excited about getting this information. They thought the cemetery was a pet cemetery.

Property Maintenance - Silvia McKay, Julie's mother, has donated a small lawn tractor to help mow the grass around the Grange. Paul has sent a proposal to the Grange to pay the Society to build a small shed under the ramp to store the tractor and the lawn mower, donated by Carolyn and Dick Bogh.

Former School House Properties - Jan Serabona said in working with the school children, letters were sent to owners of former school houses Two had been sold this year: School house #4 and the one on Pleasant St. near Jeannette's. One of the owners responded and is very interested in historical things and may join the Society. Apparently both new property owners want to keep some semblance of what the property looked like at an earlier time.

Paul thanked Carolyn Bogh for a great program and also Ruth and Grant Hirst for the delicious refreshments as well as Julie Johnson's contributions.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Polly McDonough