

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

Hi Everyone,

I hope that you and your families are healthy and continuing to stay safe. The vaccine rollout has been a blessing. Julie and I will get our 2nd shot this coming Wednesday. We are very excited. I hope that things are going well for all of you too as we all try to return to normal.

As I look ahead to our next three monthly meetings, I think it would be prudent to cancel our meetings in April and May. I don't believe that the situation with COVID has progressed enough to allow such a meeting to take place safely.

This email officially cancels our April and May meetings.

I will send out another email in May to announce the status of our June Meeting. We may be able to hold our June meeting outside at Dead Duck or maybe the situation with COVID might be such that we all feel comfortable meeting inside again. I invite your input on this matter. Please "reply all" to share with everyone or just to me if that makes you feel more comfortable.

In the meantime, continue to stay positive and Julie & I hope to see you all soon.

Sincerely,

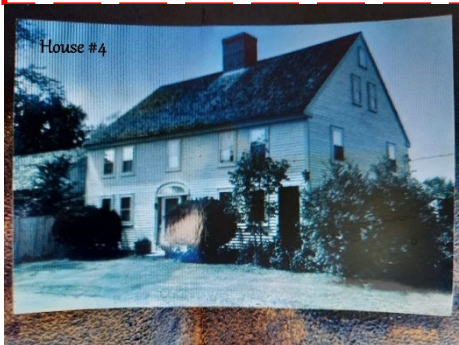
Paul Johnson

ELIOT HOUSE CONTEST

Julie and Paul report that there were no one has yet been able to identify where in Eliot house #1 and #2 might be.

House #3 was spotted by Pam Ashley and Steve Dow. It is the Sullivan Family home on Goodwin Rd almost across from Helen Sullivan's present home. Go check it out. It's a beautiful house with a spectacular view.

Thanks so much to Steve Dow for the "Today" picture. Anyone venture a guess as to who the people are standing in the photo?



House #4 was identified by Pam Ashley and Sylvia & Bud Moynahan

Thanks to Ernie Bruneau for providing the "today" picture.



Capt. Elisha Shapleigh House, circa 1775 and across the road is the family cemetery. Capt. Elisha, who was born in 1749 and died in 1822, trained his company of militia during the American Revolution in the living room and



their bayonet marks are said to be still noticeable on the inside walls. He and Andrew P. Fernald were instrumental in having Eliot incorporated as a separate township in 1810. It was later the home of James Waldron Shapleigh and Samuel Chandler Shapleigh; the house sitting on the lands of their ancestor Nicholas Shapleigh. The ceilings downstairs are 6 feet high and the large door, facing State Road, was used to bring the deceased to the family cemetery opposite.



House #5 has yet to be positively identified so if you have any ideas please share.

House #6 was identified by Pam Ashley and her daughter who also provided the “today” picture. It is the Parsonage for the old East Eliot Methodist Church. It is located on 493 Goodwin Road just down the road from where the church was located at the corner of Goodwin and Brixham Roads. Both the church and parsonage have had some wonderful renovations. Incidentally, the two

ladies in the “before” photo are Mrs. John Clancy and her daughter Lina Glynn Clancy. Through a program, found in her mother’s papers, Julie learned that Rev. Clancy had served as pastor in Eliot and had come back, in 1926, to give a talk at the church’s 100th anniversary celebration. The photo of the parsonage from the ‘50s was taken by Julie’s parents from the front lawn of their house.



House #7 was identified by the owner, Debbie Berthiaume. This was the Jeremiah Goodwin House, located on the corner of Goodwin Road and Odiorne Lane. Elder J.P. Goodwin formed a church of the Adventist people and a small “chapel” stood here to the left of the house. It was moved to a home on Scotland Bridge Road in York, Maine and has become a garage. All that is left here are the granite foundation pieces. A thank you to Debbie for the recent picture.

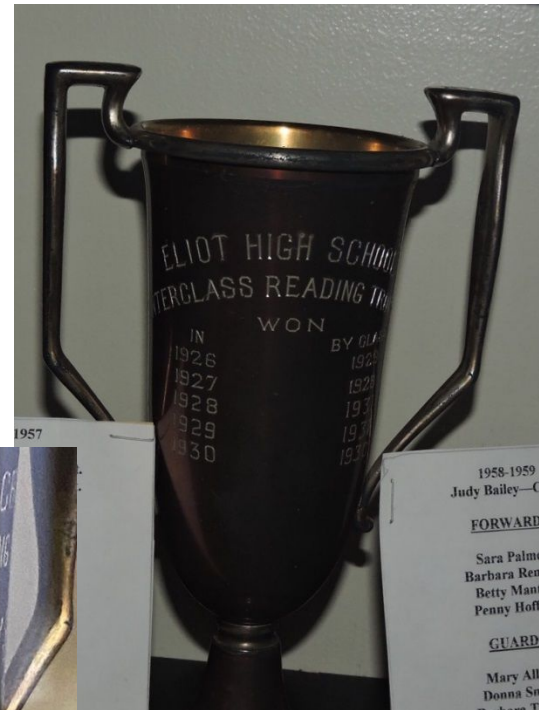
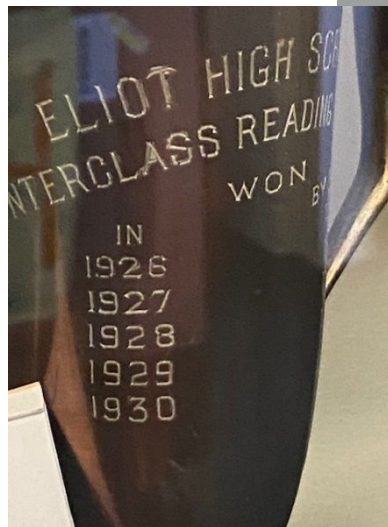


We had some very interesting responses to our inquiry as to what this might be. Phil Swan and Connie Corrigan believe this might be a sausage stuffer. Bob Fisher and Paul Goransson and members of Eleanor Pearsall’s family believe to be an old “grease gun.” Both of these uses would fit right along with it being in the possession of the family of Sylvester Bartlett, who ran a meat, poultry business as well as having to repair their own farm vehicles frequently.



This month we have another interesting item that comes from the display case at the Eliot Elementary School. This beautiful prize cup is nestled among a case full of sports memorabilia from the old Eliot High School (1940-1966). It was given for what were termed “Interclass Reading”. We were able to find a tidbit of information from a 1926 newspaper, but tells us nothing as to what this was all about. If anyone has any further information, we would love to hear from you.

The first in a series of Inter-class readings given by the pupils of Eliot High school was given last Tuesday evening at the First Congregational church. The next reading will be given on Friday evening, this week at the same place at 8 o'clock. Tickets are being sold by the pupils.



NEWS



The recent display at **Eliot Elementary School**, put together by Ann Shisler and Jan Cerabona, with the help of the staff, honored. The display featured the yearbooks of teachers and their pictures enticing the students and others to work to match them up! It gave way to lively conversations among the children and staff.

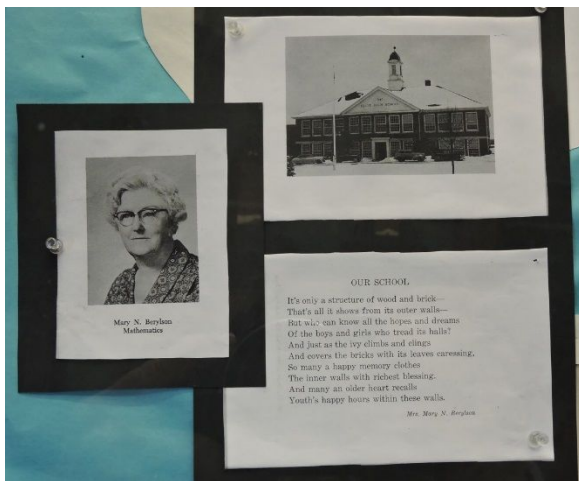
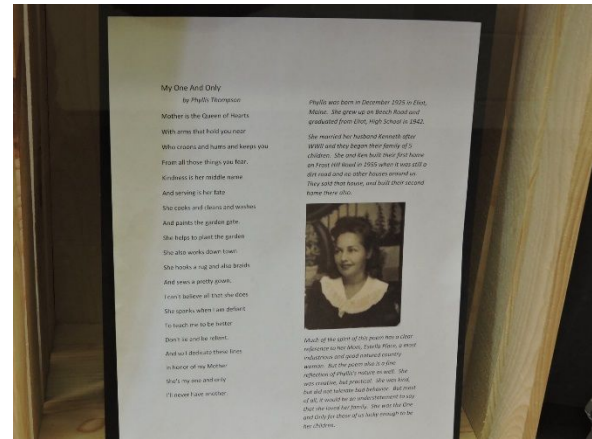
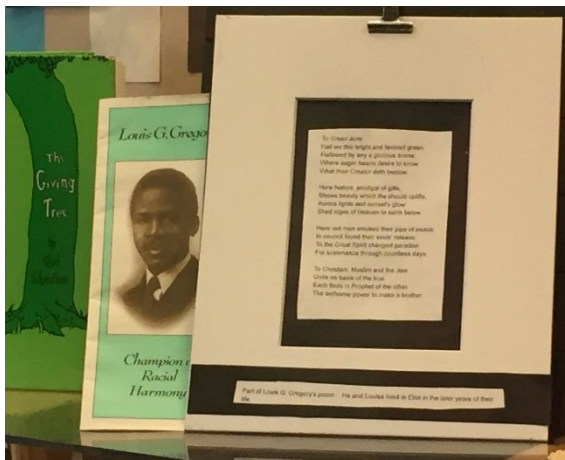


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Address: PO BOX 3, Eliot, ME 03903
 Website: www.eliothistoricalsociety.org
 Phone: 752-0174 (Rosanne)



In celebration of READ ACROSS AMERICA, May's display features poetry about and by Eliot people, along with some favorite books of children. Included are some works by Eliot poets Phyllis Thompson, Jeanette Paul, Bahai, lawyer and racial amity lecturer Louis G. Gregory, Poet Laureate Tammi Truax, Eliot High School teacher Mary Berylson, and Elizabeth Tetherly Larson.



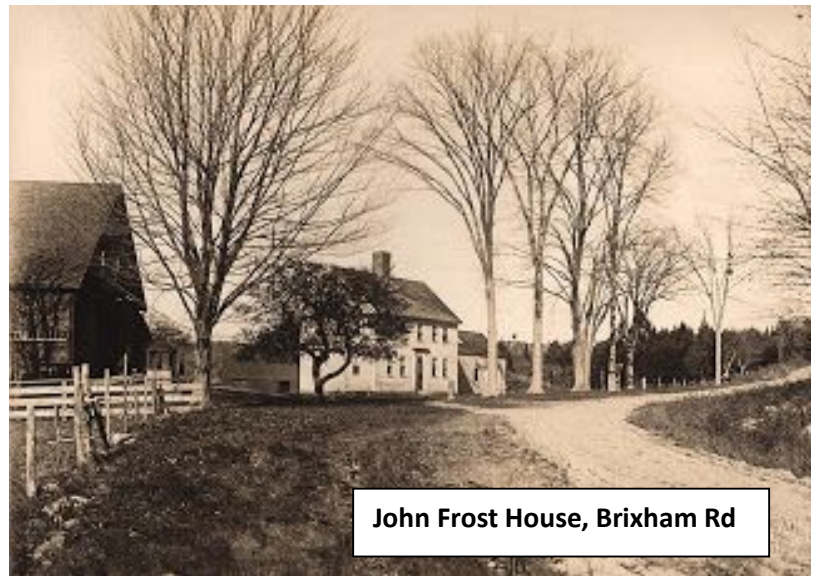
Notes on Eliot Maine History

Random investigations into the history of Eliot, Maine and the Piscataqua River region.

Editor Note Eric R. Christian, who describes himself as “software engineer by day, amateur local historian by night” has started a series of BLOGS which is sharing with the community via the Historical Society’s website. Hope you enjoy them as much as we do! You can also find them at <https://eliothistory.blogspot.com/>.

Lost Houses, Lost History

Eliot folks are a fortunate group of people. We live in an area that has largely remained rural and undeveloped for centuries. People first started building houses here in 1633, and some of our modern property lines still run along the original boundaries that were laid out 380 years ago. Early colonial settlements and farms that were part of the original Massachusetts Bay Colony were largely bulldozed



John Frost House, Brixham Rd

over due to the pressures of suburban Boston planning over the last century and a half. If people want to see original colonial-era houses that are still standing, they can see many by driving north into New Hampshire and Maine. Many of these old homes were built with thick, sturdy timbers from nearby forests. I know many people trying to keep 20th century homes from falling apart. Sadly, this is a losing battle in my opinion. The construction of many modern houses was never meant to last centuries. We will not have homes built in the 20th century standing in the 23rd century the way we have 18th century homes still standing in Eliot today, which is why it is all the more tragic when we lose one of these historic marvels to the bulldozer or the ravages of time.

I also understand that these homes have not survived on their own. They survive because they have had centuries of careful owners and caretakers. We owe a debt of gratitude to those that buy or inherit an old house and care for it and give it life. I do not know all of the old houses of Eliot that we have lost over the past century. I just know the ones that we have lost since I first came to Eliot 25 years ago.



1740s John Frost House lost 2013

The John Frost house on Brixham Road was one that awakened me to the reality that all of these old houses may not remain forever. I didn't even know it was going to be demolished. This house is featured in the "Images of America" book on Eliot produced by Margaret Elliott and the Eliot Historical Society in 2005. One day in 2013 I was driving up Brixham Road and noticed that

the old house that always greeted you as you rounded the gentle corner was suddenly gone.

Our most recent loss is the 1750 Hanscom house which was better known as "Clover Farm" on Main Street. After the loss of the John Frost house a few of us asked the town of Eliot if they would provide us notice when an old property is going to be demolished so that we may try to contact the owner or developer to attempt a last recording of the structural, architectural, and family history of a property that will soon cease to exist in our town. Not long after we took pictures of what remained of Clover Farm, the property was bulldozed to make way for a new development. I personally don't understand it. I love old houses. I would love to see new developments retain some of the old structures and property features if it is feasible. I would much rather live in a place that had preserved real history, than anywhere where history was sterilized and paved over, or worse, invented. I have to believe I am not alone.



Clover Farm lost 2021

Even an 18th century house will not survive forever without a caretaker who has the



Clover Farm, circa 1910, with Arthur Lee Hanscom

means to perform expensive repairs and maintenance. Some of these old houses are small in an era when buyers are looking for large open-concept houses. It takes a special kind of buyer. A buyer that appreciates the history of a house, the stories of the families that have lived in that house, and a desire to preserve that past while carrying on the long caretaker tradition

of that house. One day their time spent living in and caring for the old house will also be part of the history of the house.

There is a favorite poem of mine by the poet Joyce Kilmer. It is called "The House With Nobody In It". I reproduce it here because it speaks of the soul of an old house and the sadness when its days are done.

The House With Nobody In It **by Joyce Kilmer**

Whenever I walk to Suffern along the Erie track
I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles broken and black.
I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I always stop for a minute
And look at the house, the tragic house, the house with nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house, but I hear there are such things;
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and sorrowings.
I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it were, I do;
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen panes of glass,
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a scythe to the grass.
It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines should be trimmed and tied;
But what it needs the most of all is some people living inside.

If I had a lot of money and all my debts were paid
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw and spade.
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used to be
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and give it to them free.

Now, a new house standing empty, with staring window and door,
Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on its block in the store.
But there's nothing mournful about it; it cannot be sad and lone
For the lack of something within it that it has never known.

But a house that has done what a house should do,
a house that has sheltered life,
That has put its loving wooden arms around a man and his wife,
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held up his stumbling feet,
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern along the Erie track
I never go by the empty house without stopping and looking back,
Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof and the shutters fallen apart,
For I can't help thinking the poor old house is a house with a broken heart.