

September Meeting: To be announced. Be on the lookout for an email from info@eliothistoricalsociety.org

We couldn't have picked a hotter day to host a meeting, but, even so, there was a large group at the Maine Old Cemetery Association's (MOCA) meeting on July 23rd. By all reports it was a very successful event with many smiling attendees. Over 55 MOCA members were treated to our hospitality and home-made goodies. Set up, on the side tables, were displays from EHS, one on our *Adopt A Cemetery* program and the other sharing the information on the Joseph Leighton stone that was brought back here from Massachusetts. In addition, Paul set out the old log books for the Mt. Pleasant burials, our *Adopt A Cemetery* and Society brochures and info cards for our Cemetery Website. The cemetery group, from Naples, Maine, also shared the work they are doing, which included replicating the finials and fencing pieces for the ironwork surrounding cemeteries. It was a very interesting display and Paul had a chance to talk with the person involved about how it is done. It is useful information for the Daniel P. Spinney cemetery work which we have in our sights!



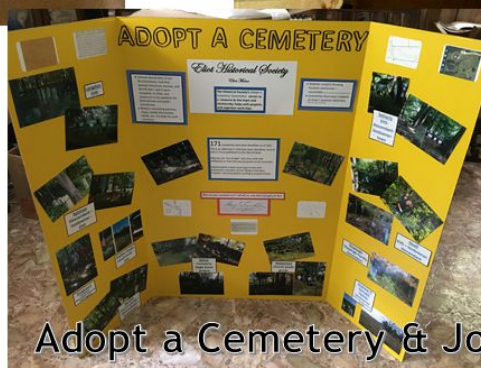
Paul ~ Eliot's Cemeteries



Eric ~ 400 Odd Years in Eliot, Maine



Naples, ME



Adopt a Cemetery & Joseph Leighton stone



Kathy Runey organized the morning snacks and lunch, assisted by servers **Tracey Graffam-Dickson** and **Julie Johnson**. Our bakers - **Ruth Hurst, Margie Brown, Rosanne Adams, Julie Johnson** and **Jan Cerabona** provided a variety of offerings. Paul writes - *“Thanks so much for “coming through” with wonderful Baked Goods that “Wowed” our visitors at the MOCA Meeting. We had a great variety and more than enough for everyone. The meeting went extremely well and I am very proud of the overall event that our Eliot Historical Society put on. And your goodies just sweetened the pot even more”.*

President, **Paul Johnson** served as host, guiding us through the day’s activities. In the morning he gave a lively program about his work with the cemeteries, both Mt. Pleasant and the private ones and ending with the unveiling (to MOCA) of our cemetery website. The completion of this project couldn’t have come at a better time. They were quite impressed with the work we have done with the private cemeteries and our collaboration with the town. It made for many discussions during the breaks.

From Native lands and European settlement to today!

N'dakinna

- 11-13K years ago Paleoindians
- 30,000 pop. before 1600
- Eastern Pennacook tribe
- 75% death rate by 1620



Early Settlement

- 1633 not 1623
- Mason Gorges 1629 Div.
- Nicholas Frost 1634
- Alexander Shapleigh 1636
- William Hilton's corn 1630
- 1632 Walter Neale evicted



Puritan Meetinghouse

- Massachusetts required inhabitants to attend Sabbath worship.
- Normally an all day event with mid-day break with men meeting at the local tavern.
- First Harvard-educated pastor, the Reverend John Rogers.
- Built the 2nd Meeting House in 1715.
- Also served as the "town hall".



Submission to Massachusetts

- 1652 signed at William's Tavern
- Site of Nicholas Frost's farm
- Promised protection
- Guaranteed shaky land title claims
- Imposed the Puritan Church in Maine
- Mary Bachiller only woman to sign



Slavery

- Black Will one of 5 enslaved
- First by Nicholas Frost
- Became a land owner and raised a family.
- First son Will Jr. left Kittery to live on Bailey Island, called Prince Island.
- Ancestor of many Blakes in Maine.



Scottish Dunbar Prisoners

- Battle of Dunbar 1650 English Civil War
- Prisoners sent to New England as indentured workers
- A hundred ended up settling in north Eliot
- Furbish, Neal Thompson



Brickyards

- Soil around the Piscataqua River and Sagadahoc Creek was very high in clay.
- Perfect ingredients for brickmaking.
- Cities in New England were changing from wood structures to brick due to catastrophic fires.
- Eliot provided many bricks to Boston, Portsmouth and more from the mid 1800's into the 20th century.



Green Acre

- Sarah Farmer, daughter of electrical inventor Moses Gerrish Farmer, starts a School of Comparative Religion at the Greenacre Inn 1894.
- Great thinkers from all over the world visited to discuss philosophy and religion at yearly conferences.
- Sarah Farmer converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1900 and Green Acre became a center for Bahá'í education after her death in 1916 continuing to today.




School Consolidation

- Laura V. Dame school built in 1925 started to replace some one-room schools.
- New high schools built to replace Eliot Academy.
- 1966 Eliot combines with South Berwick to create Marshwood High School.



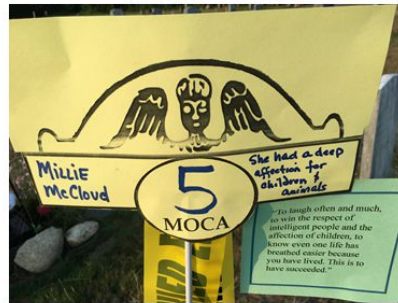

Solar Energy

- 2013 installed Solar Panels on top of Public Works garage.
- 2018 installed Solar Array on top of old landfill.
- Can now generate 95% of the town municipal energy needs.




Eric Christian shared ***400 Odd Years in Eliot, Maine***, a history presentation that took us from Paleoindian encampments, through the early settlement years, our incorporation, a look at our schools, meetings, places, important peoples and stand-out events. He brought us right up to the present as Eliot looks to the future with its solar array.

After lunch Paul joined **Rosanne Adams** at the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, where she talked about the history of the Bolt Hill/Greenwood, Mt. Pleasant and Levi and Shua Brooks Cemeteries. Rosanne had put up some markers at some interesting stones and/or people buried there, and following the short talk and Paul's famous flag pole story, people were invited to take a walk and check out some of the stones and then make their way over to the #8 Schoolhouse, where Jan **Cerabona** was waiting to greet them. Bottled water was provided at all locations as people battled the heat of the day.



Eric writes -*It was a fun day to spend time with others who are passionate about taking care of old cemeteries, because to me our cemeteries and old burying grounds are the monuments to those who came before us and the history they lived.*

Jan, who was the tour guide and greeted people at our #8 Schoolhouse Museum during the afternoon breakout session, writes that she was *proud to be a part of our host team. The schoolhouse is a hidden treasure that should be shared whenever possible. One of the attendees stated that 'entering the schoolhouse is like taking a step back in time'. The individual was a member of an historical society in NH and was anxious to tell her group about our restoration project and involvement with second grade during their history studies. She took lots of pictures and asked lots of questions!*

The **Eliot Maine Bicentennial Committee** is still wrapping up their Maine Bicentennial activities. Yes, you heard that right! Seems they still have some funds from the *Maine Arts and Humanities Council* that are still available to complete some projects that weren't gotten to in 2020-2021. They recently went before the select board to get the approval to proceed. Select Board member Bill Widi, owner of *Sandy Hill Farm*, and active in our community, offered to make one of these projects a reality – the marking of *Melvin Dixon's Blacksmith Shop*. Town meetings were held here from 1876 until we built a permanent town hall in 1880. Located on State Road, next to the police station, this building was part of the Dixon estate, much of which has since been acquired by the town and forms the area of our municipal complex. The home of Melvin's parents, more recently the office for the Eliot Community Services Department (ECSD), was taken down and ECSD moved to the Elementary School. The "blacksmith shop" is now used by them for storage. Once the painting is completed it will be installed on the building in time for Eliot Festival Day and plans are to have a little display in front of the building as well. In support of this **Eliot Historical Society** will install a display on "blacksmiths" at Eliot Elementary School, which will greet the returning students in September! A huge thank you to Bill for his contribution!

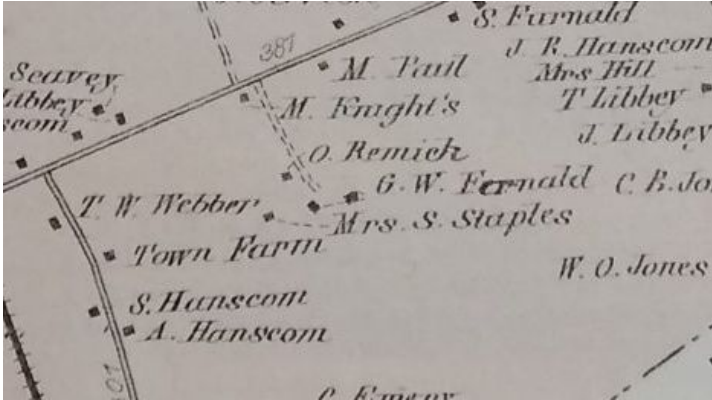


SPEAKING OF CEMETERIES

The weather has been pretty crazy this spring and going into the summer the heat of late, along with EHS activities and personal schedules, gave us a late start in our cemetery clean-up this year. We have a number of volunteers and so Jan and I decided that the best way to go about the work is to let our volunteers set the day and we'd join them and invite others, as needed. Our first cemetery was the Knight Cemetery, off Beech Road. Our two High School student volunteers Milo and Liam were looking for some community service credits. John E. Frost had recorded 10 stones in this cemetery, but only one was standing. It has two gates, but only the further gate was able to be opened so they first cleared a way around the cemetery and then began the work of cutting down the samplings and brush and clearing the overgrown vegetation. Working with Jan, six stones were uncovered, laying underground, in front of an extremely tilting wall of granite blocks. Examining the wall, we found that, although tilting, it was secure and posed no danger. Now that the growth has been removed, we will have a team come back in and set up the stones. Thank you to Milo and Liam for a job well done!



Buried in this cemetery are Hannah and James Fields and father James; Mark and Anna Maria Knight and children Daniel, Ellen, Frederick, Mary A. and M. Willie; and Hannah F. Paul the daughter of James and Sarah Paul. The 1872 town map shows Mark Knight's house at what is now 314 Beech Road. The cemetery is noted in the deeds for this property.



The Association for Gravestone Studies has a Virtual Book Club. Each month they focus on a book about cemeteries, gravestones, etc. Their list of books, which I thought might interest our members who are cemetery “fans” includes -

- The American Resting Place: 400 Years of History Through Our Cemeteries and Burial Grounds* by Marilyn Yalom and Reid S. Yalom
- Corpses, Coffins, and Crypts: A History of Burial* by Penny Colman
- The Aftermath of Battle: The Burial of the Civil War Dead* by Meg Groeling
- The Speaking Stone: Stories Cemeteries Tell* by Michael Griffith
- The Victorian Celebration of Death* by James Stevens Curl
- Being Dead Is No Excuse: The Official Southern Ladies Guide to Hosting the Perfect Funeral* by Gayden Metcalfe and Charlotte Hays

The Association for Gravestone Studies
 278 Main St., #209
 Greenfield MA 01301
www.gravestonestudies.org

**CONTRIBUTED BY
 ERIC CHRISTIAN ~
 ONE OF HIS
 FAVORITE POEMS**

In a Disused Graveyard
 BY ROBERT FROST

The living come with grassy tread
 To read the gravestones on the hill;
 The graveyard draws the living still,
 But never any more the dead.

The verses in it say and say:
 'The ones who living come today
 To read the stones and go away
 Tomorrow dead will come to stay.'

So sure of death the marbles rhyme,
 Yet can't help marking all the time
 How no one dead will seem to come.
 What is it men are shrinking from?

It would be easy to be clever
 And tell the stones: Men hate to die
 And have stopped dying now forever.
 I think they would believe the lie.

AREA NEWS AND EVENTS

Portsmouth Historical Society – Twilight Tour

August 5, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Come see what's new at each organization—including new exhibitions, new displays, new acquisitions, and new research. Our members have been busy behind the scenes and have much to share after the pandemic-induced hiatus!



Tickets—which include admission and discounts at member sites for the remainder of the season—are **\$20** in advance (\$25 day of) for adults and \$10 for children. For tickets, go to www.portsmouthhistoric.org and follow the provided link, or call Stephanie Hewson at (603) 430-7968, or Andy Goodell at (603) 433-9505. [PHSA newsletter]

Chadbourne Dig Reunion

Saturday, August 20

9am-11am

Counting House Museum

OBHS is hosting a Chadbourne Dig Reunion on Saturday, August 20th from 9-11am at the Counting House Museum.

9-10am: Open House with breakfast treats and coffee. Explore the new exhibition, *Berwick Begins*, which highlights the most intriguing artifacts of the Chadbourne Dig. There will be a slideshow, and we will bring out additional items to view.

10am: Dr. Tad Baker will present a short talk about the significance of the dig, the connections it makes to other collections in the region, and what comes next.



**OLD BERWICK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(OBHS)**

For more information
– visit their website
or write:
info@oldberwick.org

Material Culture Now Open

Material Culture: Domestic Cloth-Making in 18th-Century New England
Open June 4, 2022 - October 30, 2022

This exhibition explores the material culture of early domestic textile arts and the tools used to produce linen and woolen cloth in rural New England homesteads. Material goods provide a window into standards of *living*, self-sufficiency, economic diversification, and the transition from frontier life to settled communities.

