

ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

MAY 8, 2023

First Congregational Church of Eliot and via ZOOM.

PRESENT: 13 with 0 on ZOOM

President Tracey Graffam- Dixon opened the meeting at 7:00pm.

Margie Brown and Ruth Hurst were thanked for providing the evening's refreshments.

Announcements

1. Attendance sign-up sheet passed around. If have already given contact info then can just sign your name.
2. June refreshment volunteers – Julie Johnson and Tracey Graffam-Dickson
3. #8 Schoolhouse is now open every Saturday and we are looking for volunteers
4. The cemetery cleanup schedule is out.
5. Our Annual Report to the town (for submission in the town book) has been submitted by Paul Johnson.
6. We were reminded to check out our website with its new additions and be sure to follow us on Facebook to get update announcements and news.
7. Reminder that June 7th we have been invited to join the 2nd graders at the Elementary School for a cookout and Colonial games. They would like to know how many to plan for so let Jan know if you think you will be coming.

Program

“Do You Know As Much As A Second Grader”. Second grade teacher Ann Shisler was not able to present, due to a family obligation and so she sent along a PowerPoint and an activity which Jan Cerabona presented to the group. Jan began by talking about the *Eliot Schools* book and those involved in its making and how important it is as a resource. The comprehensive work to produce it has resulted in a publication containing information that is found no where else, all in one place. Copies of the source materials that were used were then put into binders and loaned to the William Fogg Library by the Historical Society so that all would have access to this wonderful research. Jan talked about going with Rosanne to look at the locations of our one-room schoolhouses and visiting with some of the owners of those still standing, but now used as residences.

The Eliot history program at the Elementary School has been in place since early 1995 when teacher Esther Morrow, after collaborating with Ed Vetter to produce the publications *Eliot's Past*, *Brickyard's of Eliot*, arranged for a bus tour for the children of our historical, but wanted to do more. Esther and Donna Fernald worked to bring more of the history to the children through some lesson plans they developed. Ann Shisler joined the them and today, working with her fellow teachers, they have

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produced slideshow presentations on various subjects such as the brickyards, Shem Drowne, schools, the clipper Nightingale, the gundalow, etc. Because it would be burdensome and unrealistic to expect the teachers to be able to present all the various subjects they developed what they call “expert groups. Each 2nd grade teacher takes a subject to present to each of the classes. This way makes it easier for new teachers coming in to feel comfortable with the curriculum.

Tonight’s program takes one of these topics – Eliot’s Schools. A slide presentation took us through the material that the children cover. It includes a short history of our town’s various schools over the years, all the way, up to the present – One room schools, the various high school buildings and the change in grades that occurred over the many years, Eliot Primary/Elementary School, Marshwood High School/Middle School, etc. Jan explained that early on, in the gathering of information the teachers reached out to us and we helped provide resources and people who might be interviewed and their stories recorded. Today, the teachers have the stories and memories of people like Jeannette Paul, Florence Moulton and Lena Molleur Bernard Residents provided real information on what school was like during their days in a one-room schoolhouse. Their information and stories are then related in the slide presentations and also as the children visit our schoolhouse each year.

One of the earliest activities that second-grade students participated in was to write to the owners of the schoolhouses to ask if they might have any information on their house or the school that was on the site. Several owners did respond.

Spread out on several tables was a huge floor mat that the children use to show where they might have gone to school, during the days of the one-room schoolhouses. It is a present-day map on which the 8 school districts have been marked off and on each district is a replica of the schoolhouse that was there, back in 1872. Monopoly game pieces (houses) are then used by students to mark their district school.

The meeting closed at 8pm for refreshments, during which we were invited to participate in an activity that the children do, when studying the schools. Using markers and square wooden blocks, we were asked to draw on them the schoolhouse we would have gone to, based on where we live today.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosanne M. Adams, Secretary