

# ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

MAY 13, 2024

First Congregational Church of Eliot and via ZOOM.

PRESENT: 15 with 3 on ZOOM

Vice President Paul Johnson opened the meeting at 7:00pm.

Sally Hartford and Cheryl Goodwin were thanked for providing the evening's refreshments.

## **Program**

Paul introduced Jan Cerabona, who along with Rosanne Adams constructed a display for the Great Works School in South Berwick that focused on Sarah Orne Jewett and Sarah Jane Farmer – “The Sarahs”. She explained that one of the ways we can reach the community is by displays at various schools that kids, educators, and parents see as they walk into the buildings. From September 23, 2023 to May 2024 they have placed 11 displays (5 at Eliot Elementary, 5 at Great Works, and 1 at Marshwood Middle School). Rosanne gathers much of the materials and provides information for them and Rosanne takes them and turns them into slides to be printed/shared in our newsletter, website, and Facebook page offerings. Binders are kept with the display pictures and labels so that others will be able to take over some day. New materials are added, to the binders all the time and allow for the use across various displays. One of the most meaningful goals is to help kids become more aware of their history and inspire them to look to the future.

Jan noted that there is no guarantee that the work at Eliot Elementary School will be continued unless subsequent educators take it up and continue the program that Esther Morrow started so many years ago, and members of Eliot Historical Society step forward to continue the displays, since she and Rosanne won't be around forever.

The displays at Great Works School, by design, look at both of the towns – Eliot and South Berwick – so that children not only can take pride in their own town's history, but learn something about their classmate's towns. Because now, we are the “old ones” we need to share the history that we have and the stories that are our stories. People are urged to start writing them down and perhaps there will be time to share at our meetings as well.

“The Sarahs” display, to pique the interest of the kids starts with a number of “Did You Knows” throughout. It was found that it was better not to have a lot of words, but many pictures and items and so the “did you knows” help to convey history very simply. The display takes a look at Farmer and Jewett's families, their similarity during their childhoods in helping with their father's work, their common associations with literary figures of the day and deep love of books which then translated to Sarah Orne Jewett writing a piece for Sarah Farmer's publication, in 1888, for the Summer Fete that raised money for the Eliot library. The women's associations gave them an every widening view of the world and each, in their own way, were able to accomplish great things and leave a lasting legacy behind – Sarah Orne Jewett in her writings and Sarah Jane Farmer in Green Acre. Also in the display were books written by Sarah Orne Jewett and ones written about Sarah Jane Farmer and her parents – Hannah Tobey Shapleigh Farmer and Moses Gerrish Farmer. The display highlighted “Rosemary

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Cottage”, Green Acre, and Sarah Farmer witnessing the signing of the Russo-Japanese Peace Treaty in 1905 at the Navy Yard, and Sarah Orne Jewett and her contributions and design of the Fogg Memorial Building at Berwick Academy and the stained glass window there. Jan focused, for a moment, on the piece written by Sarah Orne Jewett “A Plea for Front Yards”, which laments how the fences, that once graced the front yards of homes, are being taken down and the beautiful plantings of flowers are fast disappearing and the need to preserve these beautiful spaces. It brings to mind the work that the Eliot Garden Club does now in trying to bring back some of that beauty that was lost.

Discussion followed. The question was asked – “How do we share what we have with other communities?” If we are to grow we need to work together. To that end Jan reported that she is sharing our #8 Schoolhouse information and schedule with Hamilton House, the Kittery Historical and Naval Museum, The Counting House Museum as well as putting up flyers around town. Sally Hartford asked about the time capsule that her class placed at the Eliot High School (now Elementary) and the history that that contains, if it can be found. She also said that her class designed their class ring. All of this is history. Eric Christian mentioned another small time capsule (might have been a coke can!) that was buried when the upper playground was built. Somewhere by the swing near the back of the playground. Jan said that she would check on that. As for the time capsule mentioned by Sally, Jan said that several people have mentioned time capsules on the grounds of the Elementary School but have yet to be found, however the Time Capsule buried in Hammond Park during Maine’s Bicentennial, is well marked and a video was taken and a list, with pictures of each, was made of the items placed in it.

### **Announcements**

1. June is our Quarterly Business meeting and there will be a short program
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. Paul and Julie will not be able to attend Eliot Festival Day so we need to find others to set up/man and take down that day. Set up is 7am and before 8am and 3pm is the take down time. Reminder that it is only an informational booth. Jan said that if we don’t have a booth we can have the announcers mention the #8 Schoolhouse is open during the day.
5. Sally Hartford told about a quilt dating back to the 1940’s that the church ladies had made. It will be on sale during their plant sale and will be raffled off. They were looking for information on the people who made the squares. She will see if she can get it for us to look at, at our June meeting.
6. Jan reported that the school children will be coming to visit the #8 Schoolhouse this week.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosanne M. Adams, Secretary

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