

**Minutes of the
Eliot Historical Society Meeting
McPherson Hall, First Congregational Church
June 9, 2025**

Secretary Rosanne Adams opened the meeting at 6:35 PM, welcoming those present.

Present were 12 in person and 6 on ZOOM.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Need for volunteers for refreshments for November. December is annual holiday party and will be asking for people to bring something to share, if they wish. Jan Cerabona was thanked for the evening refreshments. Our Schoolhouse will be open on Wednesday and Saturdays from 10-2. Always looking for volunteers to help host. Jan made us aware that this coming year is the 85th anniversary of the opening of Eliot High School (1940). Displays at Eliot Elementary School will center on this anniversary with the display covering the decades and changes from a High School to an Elementary School. It is also the 100th anniversary of the opening of what was the Laura V. Dame School (1925).

PROGRAM

Eric Christian presented a program (with slides) focusing on “Researching the History of Your Home”. The Historical Society gets quite a few queries during the year asking about the history of homes in Eliot. He chose what is commonly known as the “Betsey Green House”, located on Old Road as an example of the process he goes through and the resources available, that he uses, to help with putting together a history. The building is located across from Frost-Tufts Park on Old Road and is over 150 years old. Not much is known about the house, but there are many stories surrounding it. Betsey Green, the wife of Stephen Green lived there for 36 years. Stephen had a shoe shop in the cellar and Betsey a “nibs and knobs” shop upstairs. In the Old Eliot book there is a writing that says the land was deeded to John Green though a grant from the town of Kittery. Through the use of the York County Deeds that are now online (along with indexes), it was discovered that in 1648 the town did grant 30A of land to John Green, but it was not in the area of this house. The deed shows that the 30 acres included Frank Fort Island and acreage which was included in that of what is now the Eliot Boat Basin property, not on Old Road.

Eric said he uses both resources in print and may or may not also be online, such as the Old Eliot magazines, the 1856 and 1872 maps, the town GIS maps and tax records on our Eliot Town website, noting that the “year built” may not always be accurate); the York County Deeds, which, until recently only went back to 1966, but now go back to the first deed recorded. The York County Deed records online also included most of the “survey plans”. A Reconnaissance Survey conducted by Eliot Historical Society with a grant from the Department of the Interior (not yet online but copies exist at the William Fogg Library). These and the other resources that are available will be made available on our website.

In looking at the Betsey Green property, and the writings of Dr. Willis in Old Eliot he say that the doctor had grown up almost next door to Betsey Green and would have known that she lived there and so it is not surprising that when he wrote about the house he would have used Betsey Green’s name to describe her home.

The home of S[teven] Green, as well as the house on the hill behind it and the Benjamin Kennard house next door, are shown on Eliot’s 1856 and 1872 maps (online at our website). These maps show the location of houses and their owners and are an important resource. Oliver and Grace Prime bought the property and some of that around the house. Grace Prime was a Kennard. The Prime’s bought the house on the hill up back of Betsey’s. They bought the property with the stipulation that Betsey could live there until she died. Betsey died in 1890.

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When you are fortunate, the previous owners of a property are listed in the deed, at the bottom, before the signatures. In some cases though there is either no information or just a reference to another previous surname or perhaps a lead to a will. Often you have to look further and in another direction to discover previous owners of a property.

Near the Betsey Green house, at the bottom of the hill is a Nason Cemetery. Buried here is Mary Nason, who died in 1855. Mary sold the house to Freeman Hodgdon in exchange for being taken care of during her lifetime. No deed could be found giving the property to John Nason. It is not uncommon to get stuck in being able to verify through a deed or probate transfer which sometimes don't contain enough information to pinpoint the property location or note a building on the property and some deeds may be recorded in another state registry. Sometimes the grantor or grantee did so to verify their rights to property. One just hopes that the probate registrar has impeccable handwriting as many documents are very hard to read.

Pelitiah Wittum married an Elisabeth Nason. By 1800

It also helps to look at the properties around the one you are looking at. In this case Dr. Pierpont builds a home and sells it to Benjamin Kennard (next door). The deeds show that John Nason's property is easterly to our property. So, by 1800, John Nason owns what would become the Betsey Green property. It is very likely that John Nason built this house in the late 1790s to early 1800's. John Nason married Mary Tetherly.

BUSINESS

1. The MINUTES are posted on the website and there is a link to them in the Email that goes out with our newsletter. At the Quarterly Business Meeting the previous minutes are voted on, with corrections noted and the Quarterly TREASURER REPORT is read. Because neither are yet available for review, the approval of minutes and reading of the quarterly treasurer report will be delayed to the next meeting

2. Amount from the Ore Nell Restaurant was reported as \$431 and the Schoolhouse received \$150 from the school classes that visited this year.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Rosanne shared that Paul Johnson will no longer be able to do the mowing at the Grange Hall and has proposed that we offer to buy, from the Grange (if they have no use for it), the storage unit where he keeps his lawn mower. The idea, being, that we could use the storage shed for items such as tables, extra chairs, and other items that would not be harmed if stored in an unheated building. *The discussions then switched into what the plans are for our collection that is in the Grange. It had been discussed before that it should be moved, but, the Board of Directors (BOD), after meeting and investigating some steps to take, decided it was not a feasible solution at this time and so the collection has remained at the Grange. Member, Bill Morgridge offered to give us a 40 foot trailer to place at the Schoolhouse or other location, to put our collection in. Following some discussion, Rosanne suggested that this offer should be taken back to the BOD to look at again and for the time being we not send a letter to the Grange concerning the storage shed. Those present AGREED to this course of action.*

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OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Upcoming fundraiser: Community Night at Loco Coco's in Kittery, 4-8pm on June 17.
2. No EHS Meeting in July
3. Suggest that our August picnic we held at the #8 Schoolhouse. Those present AGREED to do this. People are asked to bring their own food and something to share (if they wish). We will provide drinks.
4. September program to be announced

NEXT MEETING August 11, 2025. Annual Picnic at the #8 Schoolhouse

Refreshments were served by Jan Cerabona.

Meeting closed at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosanne M. Adams - Fisher, Secretary