

FredMerriam

It's so hard for him that I'm president. You guys know it's a disease. It makes life difficult.

Anyway, thank you for coming today. And I see members here. And if you're not a member and you'd like to join, we have some flyers on the table.

And it's not very expensive to join for a year. We give you programs, and we send newsletters out so you know about our programs that are coming. Today is a special program because my husband has worked for four and a half years in the basement where the computer is.

And as I tell him, in the basement with Eleanor. Of course, Eleanor would be over 100 years old, so I really didn't mind. I stayed upstairs with a clicker for the TV.

He retired from Renfia. He's an engineer. He's not a book writer or anything like that.

And it's kept him busy for a couple of years, so I don't know what we're going to do after this. I don't mind. Oh, okay.

It's all mine. Okay. And what he liked to be too much.

I'd come home with a new drink recipe, and I'd say, here, try this. And when he got so he couldn't type chunks in, he'd come up out of the basement. That's how it's always been.

So anyway, without further ado, I'll let Fred take over and tell you about this whole process and what happened here. And you've seen the book. After he gets through, he'll sign many books for you, so you're here at this very special event because there's been three books done in the 300 years.

This is the third one. And you happen to be here, so you can have each other to sign it. So that's great.

I don't want to panic, but I'm here. Okay. Fred.

I'm very pleased to have been a small part of the continuity of Chelmsford's historical life. And I'm very happy to be here today to talk to you about the history of Chelmsford, 1910 to 1970. And it's actually 1910 to 2010.

And I'll explain as we go through. But first, I want to find out something from you. So I'm going to take a little survey here.

And two questions. The first question is, has anybody here ever been confused by the Chelmsford Historic Society, Chelmsford Historical Commission, and Chelmsford Center Historical District? Raise your hand, please. Okay, so let's say maybe 30% of the people 20 to 30% of you have been confused at one time.

You're included. And the second question is, who initiated this book project that you're here to listen to today? There are three possibilities. And I'm going to take a little survey to show of hands for each one.

Was it the Chelmsford Historical Society? Was it the Chelmsford Historical Commission? Or was it the town of Chelmsford? Okay. Who said that the Chelmsford Historical Society initiated this project? Two, okay. Who says it was the Chelmsford Historical Commission? One.

Number one, who says it was the town of Chelmsford? Alright, looks like we have a majority for the town of Chelmsford. Okay. Now that I've set you up for some surprises, we'll get into the program here.

As Carol said, Eleanor would have been over 100. And I'll be honest with you, I never met Eleanor. I never talked to her on the phone in my entire life.

So it might be a little bit of a surprise that the two of us working on the same book never actually crossed paths. So we're going to go through a little rollercoaster through time here, and you're going to see some connections between people in town and events and committees and so on that kind of tie this together. And I think you'll understand.

And I think you're going to be a little bit surprised along the way here. So, Eleanor was born. First connection, her mother actually worked with Wilson Waters.

And when, the year she was born, Wilson was actually writing the town history of the previous one. And Eleanor was very active in the Girl Scouts. At the Unitarian First Parish Church, this is, I believe, the first Girl Scout troop in town.

And she was extremely active. Here's the proof. When she was 19 years old, she got the Golden Eagle Award, which is the highest award for a Girl Scout.

I believe it's comparable to Eagle Scout, to the Boy Scouts. And she was actually a freshman at Wellesley College during this time. The Chelmsford Historical Society was formed in 1930.

Eleanor's mother was a secretary of the Chelmsford Historical Society. In 1955, she wrote features for the Chelmsford Newsweekly tercentennial edition. And how many of you have those editions still? Yeah, there's a bunch of people.

There were two versions. There was a newspaper version, and then there was a dark blue bound covered version. And if anybody is interested in that, the Historical Commission website, that edition has been scanned in its entirety, and you can read it.

So, 1959, the Haywood Garrison House was offered to the Chelmsford Historical Society. Warren C. Laidu, he was a contractor, and he owned the house, and he wanted it historically preserved. I guess he decided not to develop the property, so the Historical Society was offered the Garrison House, and they voted based on not having enough manpower, and seeing that it

was far too much money.

And speaking of Garrison House, I see George Richardson just walked in. So, anyway, the old Chelmsford Garrison House Association formed that year once the Historical Society turned it down. And I was surprised.

One day I was rummaging through the old meeting minutes, and I happened to run into the meeting minutes where they actually voted down acceptance of this amazing gift. So, it's well-preserved in Garrison. There's plenty of room for two historic, private, non-profit organizations in town, so it worked out for the better in the long run.

The Chelmsford Historical Society was not incorporated until 1963, so here it was officially incorporated in the state. And I just wanted to show you some of the key people that fall into this particular narrative. And Gordon D. Wolfe, he was a veteran's agent, but his wife became very involved in the Garrison House, one of the first involved in the Garrison House Association.

And she pulled Eleanor into the Garrison House, and that's where Eleanor's leadership lay between the Historical Society and Garrison House. She was deeply involved with Garrison House. Bill Drury, he comes into play because in about nine years, his wife was going to get bitten by the history bug really hard.

And Jane Drury, and she factors into this narrative very closely. Warren Leahy, I already mentioned, he was the owner of the Garrison House at the time that it was given to the Old Chelmsford Garrison House Association. And it's Old Chelmsford, I'll just pitch for George, because when Garrison House was built, Chelmsford was much larger and included Westford and parts of Kingsborough and Carlisle and all of Lowell.

So that's why it's called Old Chelmsford because that was a different town when the house was built, okay? Get that right? So, the other person on this is Christy Petty, okay? Oh, I wanted to mention George Parkers briefly. He's not really part of the narrative. Well, he is sort of.

There were three George Parkers. The first one, George Adams Parkers, back around the late 1800s, he was a selectman and very active in town affairs. And his grandson, George A. Parkers, was involved in the historical society here.

But the other George Parkers is George T. Parkers, okay? Now, who was George T. Parkers? Well, you probably never heard of him because he was known as G. Thomas Parkers or G. T. Parkers. And who was G. T. Parkers? He was the owner's father. So his name was also George Parkers, okay? But maybe because he was already a famous George Parkers, he was always known as G. T. or G. Thomas.

And the last person is Christy Petty. He was a well-liked insurance agent in town. And he was very active in the historical society.

In fact, he became president from 1963 to 65, I believe, was the years that he was president of

the historical society. So the society had been continuing since the 1930s. But these were the people at this point in time that actually incorporated it.

So here we go. Okay, 1965. President of the historical society, Christy Petty, moves that the town vote to have the Board of Selectmen appoint a committee of five persons to make the necessary preparations for the printing and publishing of a town history from 1916 to date.

It was so voted. All right, right here, this is from the annual town report, 1965. Here's the smoking gun.

Who initiated this book project? Christy Petty, Townsford Historical Society president. I checked through all the annual town records. He was not a town official at all.

So this book was initiated by motion at town meeting by the president of the Townsford Historical Society that year. There's only one person left on this list right here, William Drury. I called Bill yesterday.

Now, I'll tell you, I discovered this on Friday, this information, and I asked Bill, I said, Bill, do you remember being at a meeting where the board talked about having Christy go to the town meeting and make a motion to set this up? And he said he didn't remember that, but he does remember it was discussed at the board meeting. So there's a smoking gun. And the Historical Society kicked the ball off, got the whole thing running.

All right, now, later in the year, the town, the selectmen presumably appointed the first committee. There were five members appointed, and the first one, Reverend Roland E. Moran, he was the pastor at the Unitarian First Church in the center, and Julia Fogg was very active many years. Frederick Byrne was interested in photos and the history of West Chelmsford.

Ronald Vander Schuur was from South Chelmsford, and he left town shortly after, so he had to be replaced. But George Parkhurst, who was initially appointed, turned down his appointment. So at the first meeting, there were only four people.

They had to pick a replacement. They selected Charles Watts, Sr. Okay, now, I have a question for the group here. Please raise your hand if you have ever seen what Charles Watts, Sr. looks like.

We got one, two, okay, three, four. Okay, we have four people that know what Charles Watts looks like. All right, if you'll look over here to your left.

How many know what Charles Watts looks like? Very good. Very good. I turned you around.

All right. On the January 10 meeting the following year, we have a list of candidates to write a book. Of course, now they're concerned that if they have to figure out what they want it written about, they have to figure out who's going to write it.

So the first order of business is who's going to write it. We have a lot of very familiar characters

in town here. I can tell you stories about many of them, but I don't have time.

I'm just going to limit it to a few. Margaret Mills plays in things. Eleanor Parkers was the person who was picked for the job.

Out of that list, out of 15 people, she was eventually selected. I do know, because I was browsing through their meeting minutes, that they actually hired a college student who was going to be a history major. He started writing.

He wanted to be paid for transportation. He wanted to set up for a little office. They got back his first work and it got terrible reviews.

So he was fired. So Eleanor picked it up and I'm going to show you a little bit later how well she got paid. Now in 1968, we're just changing the subject, the Historical Society had another offer for a permanent home.

That was by Mr. and Mrs. Albert C. Murray. I see Gus Fahlgren is here. He was neighbors of the Murrays because he lives across the street, so you know them very well.

Right, Gus? Yup. And this time the board accepted. Now, here's a little inside story I'm going to tell you, because when I called Bill Drury yesterday to find out about the board meeting where they initiated the book, he told me that this was a very contentious issue.

The board was very polarized. There were some that really wanted to take on the project and get involved and do all the work necessary to rebuild the house, the barn, the museum, take down the greenhouse. There was just a huge amount of work to do.

So some people really didn't think it was, they thought it was too big. Bill was treasurer of the Historical Society. He was on the side that didn't feel they should do it.

He actually resigned because of that issue. So that's a little inside story that I just found out yesterday. And the people that did take it on, Richard Leahy who talks to mine, and he had a good friend by the name of Charlie Carley, and a whole cast of characters that came in and they literally lived here for months building this building that you're in right here.

And I forgot to mention that you're in the Watt-Stevens Center that's named after Booth. And Hazel Stevens over here. So the active group won the day and we're all better for it because you can see what's been accomplished here.

Now I see that Brian Herzog's in the audience. How I found out about Christy Petty, Brian is directly responsible for it, so I'm going to give him credit right now. The library decided they had a collection of town annual reports and they had an opportunity through a grant to get the reports scanned, so he sends a big package down, he sent me an email and said I'm missing all these issues from the late 1800's.

So I went upstairs, I found all the missing issues and between the two of us we have 1875 to

2011 all online and anybody can go look at them. Well, I went one step further, I copied all the reports offline, I have them all on my computer, I can search the entire database. So it was when I was searching for information on Christy Petty that I ran into that information which I wasn't looking for and this was only last Friday that Christy Petty was the one who made the motion to kick off the committee to start the book.

So thank you Brian. Carol and Fred Merriam. You met Carol earlier and I'm standing right here.

So we came to Chelmsford in 1971 and the reason that we picked Chelmsford was not because of its history and the fine people but because I worked in Andover and Carol worked in Concord, Mass and Chelmsford is right in the middle and we've already had very good schools so we're here to stay. And now the Chelmsford Historic District Study Committee was appointed by the Selectmen and this committee resulted in the Chelmsford Center Historic District and there were three people on this list that I wanted to bring to your attention that come into the narrative for the book. First one is John Alden who had been appointed to the Historic Commission at this point in time and Jean Drury, Bill Drury's wife she caught the history bug about 72 and she's doing research on houses including all the business and houses in Chelmsford Center so she was included in this appointment.

And there's Charles Watt Sr. again. Now what did Charles do? He's the one that actually drew the map of Chelmsford Center that's still used today by the Chelmsford Center Historic District. Now in 1975 Eleanor had had about almost nine years to work on the book.

She had a lot of work done. She was taking manuscripts in, getting them reviewed. They get bounced back.

Sometimes they wanted her to get rid of lists or add they made suggestions for things to add. But in any case she was had all but two what's that? I hope I'm not putting anybody to sleep. I'm showing this to you for two reasons.

One is to show you her state of mind concerning her pay and that's probably why you're getting a kick out of it. And the other one is to show you the awkward sentence structure that Eleanor was famous for that we dealt with in making this book. I might remind you that to this point I've had no reimbursement of any kind although I believe a certain amount was to be paid after a part of the manuscript was completed.

This will be in your records I'm sure, but it did not come back to me after my submission of it. I am also keeping account of the expenses of using the copying machine, purchasing materials etc. used in this work and will submit that at your pleasure.

So this is a classic Eleanor speak and it also shows some of the typing characteristics that we had to work through. I've got another example to show you later but basically she hadn't received a dime and she's worked on this project for nine years. So she said it very mildly, but you get an undertone.

Come on guys. So it turns out three days later the board or I should say the committee updated the history did vote to pay her, I think it was \$800 just three days after they got this letter. So I'm surprised she waited this long to get one.

That was the payment, that particular payment. I think she needed to get more after that. Okay, in 1977 Eleanor donated her grandfather's blacksmith shop.

He was Marcus Byam and her mother Edna was a Byam. This is over on Mabel Road. So this is the day that they had cut it in half and they were moving it over to the garrison house.

1980. Now maybe this is wishful thinking but Paul Hart put in a selectment for the town. He moved to vote to raise \$18,000 to get the book printed and I say maybe wishful thinking because I saw no evidence that Eleanor had any more work done in 1980 than in 1975 to be honest with you.

It seems as though in 1975 she was very busy as editor for the Chelmsford News Weekly. And I suspect she was a little bit out of energy. I know I would be if I was trying to run a newspaper and trying and having people talking at me trying to get me to finish a history book.

I was in the lucky position where I was driving the vote on this history book. So I had only myself to blame for the schedule but I had a committee working trying, first they tried to get her to finish it in 1976 which was the natural time of the bicentennial and it didn't happen in 1976. This vote here it says motion carried unanimously and there were as I was doing my search through Brian's online or on my personal archives now I discovered that there were three other attempts to get money to print the book.

One was about 1977 and another was 1983 and another one 1985. And all of those were either withdrawn or the vote was made. So this one succeeded.

So armed with this information now I'm getting ready to publish the book. I go down to see our town manager Paul Collin. I said, Paul we're almost ready to go to the printers and get the book.

I said, that \$18,000 must be worth a fortune now. So we had a good laugh about that and I learned that money that doesn't get spent goes back into the town's treasury. but what happened was Paul was very supportive of this project and there was actually a fund that had been used related to Charleston 350 that was still being carried year to year.

So he lent the money from that fund to be paid back. So when you pay into the book, half the money goes to pay back what the town lent to get the book published and the other half is benefiting the Charleston Historical Society which initiated the project and supplied most of the pictures. So while I just mention pictures, I'll just speak for a second about what happened with the pictures.

There were none. Elder had very few pictures in the files. So Charles Watt and Frederick Byrne

were the two people that were tasked to produce the pictures.

So most of the pictures, as I say, came from right here in the archives at the Historical Society. I prefer during, well the iron is hot. Well what was the time of month that wasn't by the time of this project? They had a budget of \$5,000 and Elmer S. Williams was supposed to come out of that.

They estimated the cost of they were talking 2,500 and 5,000 copies. I can't imagine, you would have to hire a truck to carry that many books. So they never actually got far enough.

We have a limited run of 1,000 and we hope that people will enjoy that and we do have a way to purchase more in the future. I was asking about the old funds for the previous version of the book. The funds that was available right now, I don't know.

He didn't reveal that to me. He left us a line to get books published this time around. But you don't know how much that is? I do, I know exactly how much.

It was a very reasonable rate and I had three quotes. There was DS Graphics in Stedman and over in Alpha there was Red Mill Graphics and Currier which is right in North Chelmsford a couple miles from my house. Currier came in with the best bid because the town requires three bids on every town project.

At the time I honestly thought it was a town project initially. But it turns out it was a town project kicked off by the historic. Anyway, Currier did the job.

I think they did a very nice job. I found them pleasant to work with. They do very, very large jobs.

This is a very small job for Currier. The other two, Red Mill Graphics is in the history book. There's actually a piece of that as well as some history about Currier Company in the business and industry section.

I answered all your questions except for that part. Anybody else have a question? She passed away on June 18 and here's where Jane Geraghty comes into the picture. Jane and Eleanor had become very good friends because Jane had been using Eleanor as a resource for all sorts of historical information.

Jane was well all of her paper goods, meaning photos. I believe her glass slide collection. I think they came through that route but I'm not 100% sure.

Is that right? That's right. Then from Jane, they went to Telemedia? Some of them? Through me to you. Personally, not the Telemedia.

No. Anyway, Velu who's sitting here with his son, he was a part of the accession of pictures into the Charlesford Historical Society whereas the paper now was all with Jane Drury and it was here in a vault in Town Hall and Jane was the only person that had access to those files and Bill

yesterday was telling them that she spent hours and hours in there, days and days. She'd take her laptop and she'd go in the vault and she would just go through the files and copy things and type things up doing her research.

So all this stuff I found out after the fact. I didn't know any of this. Now, this I do know about.

And Louise is laughing because she was a little bit younger in this picture. This is actually a 2002 picture but I'm using it as an example because my wife, Carol, was Ways and Means in the Historical Society and Louise was Treasurer, which she still is today. And John and I were just the flunkies that helped our wives.

So we'd be sitting in chairs and back at the country fair and chatting. Well, in 2004 John invited me to a meeting so I didn't really know what he was talking about but in July I went and it was turned out it was the Historical Commission which I had never heard of. I was totally confused between Historic Commission and Historic Society at this time.

I didn't know what it was. And I know a lot of other people didn't either. So they showed me some file cabinets that they had in Room 110 in town offices.

These files were most amazing. They had all the answers to your historical questions about buildings and shelter and businesses, monuments, you name it. And there were all the books from the celebrations in the past the 1905, 1955 all these amazing records plus a few photographs nothing like what we have here.

So it turns out they wanted somebody to build a website. I had never built a website in my life but these files were too good to let sit in a file cabinet. Oh, I have to tell you about the files.

I can only describe them as cruddy. They were different sizes, different heights and they had pieces of rebar that were fashioned into locks that looked like they were done by a blacksmith. But the files inside had all this amazing content.

So anyway, I started taking box loads of books home and learned by the School of Hard Knocks how to build a website. This right here, this is actually the page as it appeared in December 2004 on the Historic Commission website. So I kind of liked the people at the Historic Commission and the work was interesting.

You can see that you can actually make a difference because when people want to demolish a house they have to come in and we would have to do some research and determine if it had historic value. I liked the people so I applied to fill the vacancy. Tori Gullion had had to resign just before this due to medical reasons.

So I joined as well as doing the website. Now, in 2008 Town Hall had been rented by Innovation Academy for a period and there was some shuffling of town departments offices. So we got shuffled over to Town Hall.

Even while Innovation was there, we were in the basement in the evening once a month. And then when we came back to town offices, we took the opportunity to purchase these new file cabinets. So we went from cruddy to wonderful.

Even though these are used, they're very good. The town gave us these two cabinets and then a couple years later they took them back. Because they were growing and they needed space.

So anyway, I did the job. A couple of guys were shuffling in George Merrill's truck boxes of files back from Town Hall to Town Office. So I was trying to put the files in some kind of order in the cabinets.

And one file caught my attention. Because it had something wrapped around it that was pretty unusual. So I knew it was something special but I had no idea what it was.

So I opened it up and looked inside and I literally said, holy crap. Because inside was the introduction and the contents and the conclusion of the town history book. I had heard rumors of a history book but I never saw it coming.

I had no idea that it was in these files that were coming over to the cabinets. So, and even the people that had taken it over after Jane passed away really weren't aware of what was in there. This piece of yarn here, this piece of yarn is what possibly made the difference between getting this book started and missing it.

That was exciting. Anyway, Using the table of contents, there were all these files in there. There was a fire in schools and the police and it just looked like a whole bunch of town clippings, news clippings and typings.

And I know some of them, I recognize some of them were Eleanor's Newsweekly articles that she used to type up the historical articles looking back. Well, now I knew I was looking for a manuscript for a book so I was able to assemble all the chapters except for one. Churches.

And I seriously looked for that and I'm still looking for it and I still don't know if Eleanor started it or not because in the notes for the committee, there was actually a reference that she was going to present I don't know if it was an outline or first draft of the Church's chapter. And I also, in fact, in one of those folders, there were pictures that were taken by Frederick Byrne and Charles Watt for the Church's chapter. So, I apologize I didn't want to write the Church's chapter from scratch.

I didn't have Eleanor's version. No, you have to remember that Wilkes Allen that wrote the first history book, he was a minister. And Reverend Wilson Waters that wrote the second history book he was a minister.

So, do you think the history of churches at Chelmsford was covered pretty well? I think so. Now there's still more history and I actually in my adventures ran into some history I had out of the blue. In fact, just last month a parishioner at West Chelmsford Methodist Church had cleaned

out her house.

Her parents were neighbors of Frederick Byrne. So, she sent me Frederick Byrne's history of West Chelmsford and the history of the West Chelmsford Methodist Church. It's fantastic.

Unfortunately, the history of West Chelmsford was a little late for me to incorporate because the book was already passed in concrete, so to speak. But, maybe I'll get to use that information someday in the future. Okay! Scanning with character recognition.

That was a disaster. So, what I'm going to do here this is one of my favorite examples of what we were up against with Eleanor's manuscript. This has got just about everything that she threw at us.

So, we've got crossed out words, we've got letters that go up, letters that go down, we've got typed out words, we've got written over words, we've got corrected above words, we've got type corrected above words, we've got capitalization problems, we've got sentences that are crossed out, we have two staples, and we have some old dried scotch tape. So, this is what we were up against and that's why scanning would never work. In fact, I gave it the college try and it took at least an hour just to get reasonable content, let alone fixing all the errors.

I'll tell you, you take a line like this and run it through a scanner and OCR, it gives you a lot of information that you don't care about. So, I started typing one sheet and found it only took 15 minutes to type a sheet, so that was the way to go, but 15 minutes I'm not going to get this done in my lifetime, so volunteers have used it. So, I had all the chapters scanned by this time and now we can work by email, so I get volunteers.

Getting volunteers turned out to be fairly easy. Actually, Brian at the library had me met and I think I picked up one or two volunteers there, and I had a health worker that took the health department. One of the library people took the library chapter.

The school department, the head of the library at the high school took that, and one of the high school students actually did a lot of the transcribing. And a couple of other very helpful people did transcribing. How many pages? I'm thinking maybe about 800.

It boils down because this... And the chapters are different sizes, so sometimes you had to get a dedicated person to take the long chapter, like my health person, who actually was Linda Prescott, she was interested in that, so she was willing to do the health chapter, and she did it a little differently. She used a microphone and she spoke, you know, punctuation, everything. So Linda's copy when she came back, all the words were spelled correctly.

They weren't always the right words. And then she gave me the old dog ate the homework story one day. I told her that I got all the files, but the last 16 pages were missing.

And she checked and it turns out the computer had eaten the last 16 pages and she actually won. So January to May, I took the documents that came back in Word format. I sent them out

as scanned PDF.

They came back in Word, which is a Microsoft Word program, and I put them on the website as Word documents, which were converted to PDF. My wife told me not to get too technical, and I know she hates it when I throw acronyms around, but some of you do know, so those that do know, the Word documents were printed to PDF and then put on the website serially, so anybody can read the chapters. It's kind of like a Stephen King novel, except they're out of sequence when they came back.

Now, in June, the historical commission threw a curveball at me. They said, they voted together, we voted to put this off in history in a book format. So I'm thinking, oh my God.

So anyway, I went home that night and I took all the files off of the website because now we've got copyright issues, and we want to save the surprise for a day like today. So I did not reveal everything on the website. So now, July through September, in July I got Sharon Kalitry lined up to do the book design.

You can't take a Word document, no matter what Microsoft says, you can't take a Word document and send it to a publisher. If you read a Microsoft article, they might say it can be done, but if you read all the information... So anyway, Sharon has a professional program called InDesign, and she did a book called Looking Back with Eleanor Parkhurst. Anybody remember that? We sell it here at the... in fact, here, I'll just put a copy right there.

So that was done by Sharon, that's how I was introduced to Sharon Kalitry, and the author was Judy Buswick. I should say Judy compiled Eleanor's stories, so it was a collaboration between Eleanor and Judy Buswick. So now we're starting to work out the details of book design, and Sharon, of course, she's a professional, so we're going to pay Sharon.

So we went for a grant from the Cultural Council in October, and it was interesting because Judy Buswick was doing a new book about Sally Field and the quilting community, and Judy was also competing with us for this grant money, and there were about 24 people looking for grants, and there were about 80 only that got grants. I think that's roughly the number. Luckily, Judy got her grant, and we got our grant both, so we didn't kick Judy out of her grant.

Now we've got a problem. You see anything funny about these two books? This is Wilson Waters' History of Chelmsford. This is another copy with just a different binder.

This book is too thick. You're not going to sit down in an easy chair and read this for an evening. The book almost falls apart on you when you open it up because the binding is just so thick.

We made a decision to go with a different size. We said 8 1/2 by 11. I have a small library of history books, and 8 1/2 by 11 is a very comfortable size.

Several towns around have done books in that size. We decided on the size of the book. Now we have to decide because you can't have a row of text going all the way across the book.

Professional publishers know that it's about 65 words, maximum of 80, so we would have gone all the way over that. We're going to break it down into two columns. Now that we've got two columns, what do you do with pictures? I looked at some of these other history books that have got the same size, and I didn't like them at all until I bumped into this one right here, published by the New Hampshire Historical Society in 1988.

It's called *On the Road Up North*, and it's about taverns and turnpikes. It's an interesting read. But as soon as I saw the layout on this book where we had two columns, we had smaller pictures that were one column wide, and then we had larger pictures that were two columns wide.

As soon as I saw that, I knew this is exactly the format that we need. Now in January 2011, I'm working on the business and industry chapter because, I guess I didn't explain that before, Eleanor didn't finish the business and industry. She kind of started it.

She did an introduction, and then she did an outline of what she was going to put in. So for me, it was a do-it-yourself kit. She said, okay, here's all the things that I was going to look into, now you go figure it out.

So I took the outline, and it was actually the fun part of the book because in researching downtown businesses, for instance, I got to speak with a lot of interesting people, and I talked to virtually all the mill owners that own the mills in North Chelmsford today, and fascinating. So, now it's time to get proofreading. Professionals, now see, by having Judy, I mean, by having Sharon Kaletri on the team, I had professional advice, okay? So now I know, in fact, Judy Buswick is also, she's a professional writer, so between the two of them, I've learned quite a bit about this, which, things that I never do.

One thing is you should always have at least four proofreaders, so I went to line up four proofreaders and printed up some copies at the copy center and in loose leaf, and the first proofreader from the Board of Selecta was Pat Wolges, and the next one from the old Chelmsford Garrison House, Deb Tavernet, and the third one is from the newspaper world, predecessor to the, I'm sorry, follow-up to Eleanor's *Newsweek*, the independent, Kevin Zimmerman, who was, at this time, he had *ChelmsfordMassNews.com* an online newspaper, and since he's moved on to Connecticut, I went to ask Judy Buswick if she could also be a proofreader, because I really respect her opinions, and I did work with her a little bit on her book, *Looking Back*, and she had to turn me down because she was doing her book about Sally Field and quilting, which I already mentioned. So now I have three proofreaders instead of four. But anyway, March to April of 2011, the proofreading is complete, and here's where I was shocked.

I expected everybody to find the same error. It didn't happen. I couldn't believe it.

The errors that Pat missed, Deb picked up, and the errors that Deb picked up, well, Kevin actually didn't do all the chapters, so then I would have picked up some errors that the other

two didn't pick up. Now what Kevin did, he went through one large chapter, and he applied the Associated Press handbook rules, and if you read a newspaper, usually the articles read very smoothly, so there's a certain style of writing, and there were several little technical things that I ended up sweeping through the entire book, but the one that I want to tell you about that made the biggest impact to me was capitalization of proper nouns. I'll tell you, if you read a town report, you will just choke over capitalized words.

Every time they mention a selectman or a committee or anything, it's always capitalized. So Kevin explained to me how capitalization is supposed to work, and I'll tell you, the book was just bleeding red when I went through Kevin's pages, and it was much more readable after that, but still had a problem. We still had Elmer's awkward sentences, and we still had some long sentences, so now I'm getting ahead of myself here.

In May of 2011, I was working on the business and industry chapter, and I was having a lot of fun reading people, but for instance, on the mills, I was getting the story, not until 1979, which is roughly where the book ends, I was getting history through the 80s and 90s right up to 2011, or 2010, depending on when they talked to the people. Now, it wasn't my intention to fill in the last 40 years of this book. I would have just wanted to, I said, no thanks.

So, because the Board of Selectmen, of course, they'd be interested, but the information was there. And then the other thing, a lot of things were happening in Elmer's book that hadn't really been finished, or hadn't been started. And I'll give you two examples.

The sewer system in town. In her health section, the case was made by several highly qualified and energetic people in town that there was a very strong need for a sewer system. And her perspective ended somewhere around 76.

The sewer system hadn't been started in 76. Well, guess what? I know it was finished in 2010. And I know all the stats on the sewer system.

I know all the different phases it went through. So I've got all this great information there. And the other thing is when Elmer's part ended, we had a town meeting and the executive secretary system.

I think Norm Tiedemann was the executive secretary at that time. They had been trying for 40 years to get a town manager. Well, now I can say, hey, we're on our second town manager.

Here's how it happened. And here's where we are today. So there are a lot of things like that that just beg to be told from a perspective of 2010.

So that's where this epilogue chapter came about. And this really was labor of love. I learned more about the town than I ever wanted.

More than I ever expected. I'll use that word. Now, with the results of the proofreading complete, business and industry draft is now ready, I went back to Judy Buswick.

Remember I said the book still had some problems. Oh, I forgot to mention Deb Taverna. She had torn apart some of those long sentences.

So I was real happy. She got the ball rolling. And then I realized, whoa, this does read much better.

But there was still, because the book is so large, there was still problems. So anyway, this time Judy said okay because a lot of the sillier errors that she had seen the first time were cleaned up. And she had a little bit more time.

Her book was a little more under control. And so I was very, very happy that she was able to come on board. And I think you'll be happy when you read it too because this is a very readable book.

Unlike, well, unlike the manuscript. I won't say, I've tried reading Waters, but I don't find it all that readable. And there are a lot of lists.

And anyway, this book, the intention was to make it readable. And I know that Eleanor got hammered by her committee about having long lists of things. They said, you know, lose the lists.

So I took out Eleanor's lists. I turned them into Excel charts. So you're going to see charts where Eleanor actually did lists of numbers.

Okay, so now we've got Judy's corrections integrated and it's early December. Now things are going fast and furious in December 2011. This is when a whole lot of things happened.

in mid-December with the epilogue and business and industry of Judy's corrections, we've actually got a document that looks like the final book. So now we couldn't give it to Deb because if you give Deb a book to do the index on and then you go and change the pages, okay, that's not a good thing to do any further. Now, when I went to ask Deb if she could do this, she started listing some of the things that she was working on.

She's on the Historic Commission. She's on the Affordable Housing Plan Update Committee. She's president of the Old Chelmsford Garrison House Association and she's president of the Chelmsford Garden Club and it's the holiday season and she's got a lot of family that lives with her and she's got family visiting and she still took it.

And she sent it back in two weeks. The draft. So the moral of that story is, if you want to really get something done, give it to a busy person.

Okay, now late December, I sent, I did the design on the dust jacket which is the blue cover on the outside. The end papers when you open the book, those are the pictures you see inside. And the case cover is what you see on the book when you take the outside dust jacket off.

It's red, it has gold leaf, it has a town seal and so on. So, I had created these files to curb your

specifications, okay? Now I'm real proud. I send these files in and I'm thinking, ah, it's almost Miller time.

Okay. So, then I get an email back and the first one says, you need registration black on your barcode. Hmm.

And then I get another email, you need bleed on your dust jacket. And I'm thinking, what? I have to cut myself? So, I won't get technical with you, but I went scrambling to the internet to learn what the heck they were talking about and hurried to correct the situation and send the new files in. Okay, now in January 3rd, okay, just a few days later, Sharon's got her part of the content file.

It's one huge file. She sent it in. Okay, once again, just when you think you're done, your pictures, some of your pictures have Moir.

The gutter in the front matter is on the wrong side. So, anyway, I went to the internet and I went and learned about what all these things were. And Sharon scrambled for two days.

I worked with her on editing all the pictures to hear where... I said Moir, I meant Moiré. I never knew it was Moiré until I started looking into it. The guy at Courier corrected me very quickly.

So, we merged our two corrections into the file and sent it in. And then, 26th, I get a call from Courier. Actually, it was a few days before they had said that they were going to be ready.

And I went and picked it up. Now we're done. Really done.

Okay, but, now, there's a couple more things I want to talk to you about. I want to get back to the survey that we did at the beginning. Is anybody here confused between the Chelmsford Historical Society and the Chelmsford Historical Commission? One person.

Okay, we're having a remedial class. So, anyway, and then the second question is you all know who initiated this book project. It was the Historical Society.

You know who funded the project. The town of Chelmsford. And they're going to be paid back.

Do you know who owns the copyright to the book? Carmen says no. What did you say? Anybody else? No. No, Fred owns nothing.

Fred is a volunteer. And just helping make this all available to people like yourself. So, it's actually because those file cabinets that you saw are in the town office and they officially belong to an official town body, the Chelmsford Historical Commission.

The Historical Commission owns the copyright. But we're not taking the time. The town is getting their money back.

The Historical Society is making a little to help with the projects, the archives and so on,

maintaining the... Because he's married to me. Entertainment events. Entertainment events.

Carol is very important. Also. Now, what's next? Okay, the middle of last year, the Arcadia Publishing Company was searching around town to see if anybody would be interested in doing an update to a book.

Carol's holding one up right there. It's called Images of America at Chelmsford. So, I started getting these emails from other people wondering if I'd be interested.

So I said, well, you know, I'm starting to feel a little bit better about publishing a book now that the book is getting toward the end. And I might be interested in working on that. But don't bug me until after I've finished with the other book.

So, tomorrow... Tomorrow, I'm sending in a contract with Arcadia Publishing Company to do a book called Images of America, Chelmsford Revisited. And I have to have all of my work done by August 12th or 13th. And so I'm guessing that they're going to have it ready in late 2013.

So it's going to be pictures, mostly from the Historic Society. I have a couple of other leads on people with glass slides. And I know from the ones that we were talking about with Bilu, there's a lot of new pictures that have not been seen by anyone here.

And they're absolutely luscious in their detail and quality. So, that's the next thing we'll look forward to. And, thank you all for coming.

Just one last tidbit. If you're wondering where the color of the book, that blue color that's all over the outside of the book came from, if you look up here in the corner of this picture, it's the blue sky over Chelmsford that day in the 1950s. That's the color of the cover.

That's exactly what it was. Thank you. If you have any questions at all, we can take a couple.

I guess we covered everything. Thank you very much. We will be sitting over there with some ginger ale and food to eat.

And we will be selling things on the books that we've got here in Charlottesville.