



CALENDAR

Saturday September 23, Autumn begins

Monday September 25, Yom Kippur

Monday October 9, Columbus Day

*Sunday October 22, Open House—
Growing Up in Easton in the 1950's 60's
and 70's! 12:30-4:30*

Tuesday October 31, Halloween

*Sunday November 5, Daylight Savings
Time ends*

*Saturday November 11,
Veteran's Day*

Thursday November 23, Thanksgiving Day

*Thursday December 7, Pearl Harbor
Remembrance Day*

*Friday December 8, Hanukkah begins at
Sundown*

Thursday December 21, Winter begins

Monday December 25, Christmas Day

Tuesday December 26, Kwanzaa

Thursday December 30, New Year's Eve

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Fall 2023

Volume 24, Issue 3

As the Season Changes

Much has been happening over the summer. Two very successful Open Houses were held, one featuring the Ames Plow Company and its production of agricultural equipment, and one displaying vintage school attendance records of the Easton Public Schools. More exciting Open Houses are in the planning stages.

The dedication of the Lee Williams Family Colonial Shed took place on Sunday September 17. On the same day the Society hosted a cookout for members. New members are always welcome. Our October 22 Open House will feature displays about 'Growing Up in Easton in the 1950's, 60's and 70's'. Please contact the Society eastonmahsmuseum@gmail.com or email ehsnewsletter12@gmail.com if you have artifacts from that era.

Top songs: 1955, "Rock Around the Clock", Bill Haley & His Comets, 1965, "Wooly Bully," Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs, 1975, "Love Will Keep Us Together", the Captain & Tennille.

A Mystery



Inside is an account of a great unsolved mystery from 1966. In December of 1966 the Easton Cooperative Bank was robbed and the perpetrator was never caught! Sharon Baird Graves gives her eyewitness account in this newsletter. Many thanks to her for sharing and Jon Coe for passing on.

The 50th Annual NRT Harvest Fair will be held October 1, from 10:00 to 2:00. Also Check out Family STEM Nights and Sheep Pasture After Dark.

Friends of the Ames Free Library Book Sale will be held October 21 from 10:00 to 2:00.

The mission of the Easton Historical Society and Museum is to preserve, promote and interpret the unique industrial, social, cultural, architectural and environmental history of the Town.

Members Cookout 2023



It was nice to see young people enjoying themselves.



Jon Coe and Director Judge Leon Lombardi enjoy a moment at the cookout.



Hamburgers & hotdogs are always popular.

Sunday, September 17 was a beautiful sunny day. The 2023 Members Only Cookout was a great success. Hamburgers, hotdogs, chips, soda, water, and cookies were provided. Many members stopped by and new members were signed up. Below, the Kevin Williams family is officially thanked for their gift of the new storage shed.



The Easton Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly by the Easton Historical Society and Museum.

Officers

- President Kenneth J. Michel
- 1st Vice President David Ames, Jr.
- 2nd Vice President Jonathan Coe
- Treasurer Nancy DeLuca
- Recording / Corresponding Secretary Hazel L. Varella

Directors

- Joanne England
- Judge Leon J. Lombardi
- Debra Salisbury
- Steve Anderson
- Virginia Murray
- Timothy Hurley

- Educational Liaison– Matthew Auger
- Interim Curator– Arielle Nathanson
- Staff Writer– Anne Wooster Drury

EASTON COOPERATIVE BANK ROBBERY 1966!

If you grew up in Easton you probably remember the Easton Cooperative Bank. The building still stands on the corner of center Street and Main Street. It is a small, brick building. “December 29, 1966 was a typical, windy December Day,” recounts Sharon Baird Graves, who was employed as a teller and Secretary to the Treasurer at the time. There was a staff of four that day, Dorothy Berry, Sharon Baird, Alice Morse, all tellers, and Lorraine Gomes, Assistant Treasurer. The Treasurer, Richard P. Bissett, was busy in his office at the other end of the building. According to Sharon, whose eye-witness account follows, that day a robbery occurred and it *has never been solved*.

What follows is a first-hand account of that day, kindly provided by Sharon Baird Graves.

“At some point a man came in through the Center Street entrance and asked to speak to the manager about a loan. Teller Dorothy V. Berry asked him to take a seat in the lobby and approached Mr. Bissett’s office to let him know about this customer, whom she told Mr. Bissett was no one any of us recognized. Mr. Bissett greeted him and led him back through the lobby to the Board of Directors Room as he felt his office was in too much disarray with paperwork on his desk to properly conduct an interview. Not a minute later Dick appeared in the doorway of the Director’s room which led to the inner part of the bank where the rest of the employees were.



Easton Cooperative Bank



Above is a photo from about the time of the robbery. Second from left is Dot Berry, third from left is Sharon Baird Graves.

He had his hands held out and said, ‘Stay calm girls and do what he says’. We soon noticed that the man behind Dick was holding a black and silver gun. He commanded that we turn around in our chairs and put our backs toward him. Later Dick said we did that with such precision that we looked like the Rockettes. As a 22-year-old living a peaceful life in the sleepy little town that Easton was at the time I remember being terrified. I kept waiting to hear the gunshots that would shoot us in the back since we had all had a good look at this ruddy faced short man wearing a winter coat and a businessman’s hat. Obviously, that did not happen, but the fact that the man’s hand holding the gun was shaking badly

there was also the fear that the gun would go off accidentally. With our backs turned, we didn't see what was happening, but we could tell by sound that the tellers' drawers were being emptied. Expecting him to then lead our Treasurer to the 'big vault', as we called it, to get the large amount of cash kept there, we were surprised when he told us all to stand. There was a basement where records were stored, and he ordered us to it and followed us down the stairs. Now I was really frightened. Once again, I was thinking that he would kill us all and make his escape without having to worry about being identified. I believe we were told not to move from the basement for five minutes, at which point he fled. What the robber did not know was that there was an alarm in the basement. It went directly to the North Easton Savings Bank who in turn would call us to make sure it was not going off in error. When we did not answer the phone lines, they called the police who were very prompt in responding. They found us still in the basement, all of us too traumatized to go upstairs in case the perpetrator was still there.

Though our police interviews gave up a lot of information about this man, he was never apprehended."

It is still a mystery to this day– who robbed the bank, and why?

More from the Members Cookout, September 17, 2023



Left: Directors Nancy DeLuca and Joanne Duhamel England welcome members.

Right: Jack DeLuca and Director Ginny Murray man the grill.



Two Grannies on the Road

This September Two Grannies on the Road visited Easton. The Grannies are two women who travel and explore local attractions. Beth and Marcia both live in Massachusetts and recently visited Easton. On their journey they sat down with Ken Michel at the Railroad Station to learn a bit about Easton's history. Segments of their show can be seen on YouTube.

August Open House, Vintage Farm Implements & Post Office Memorabilia

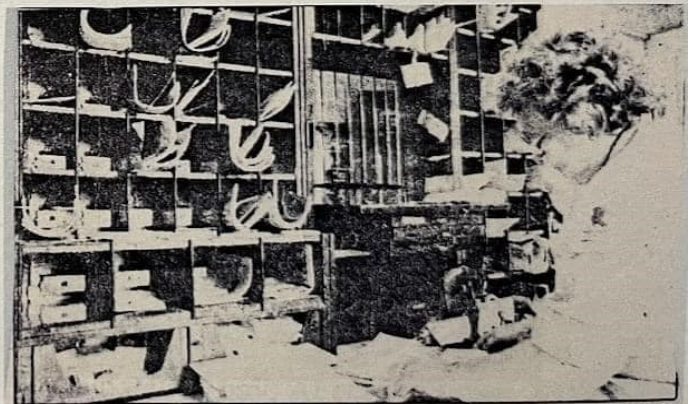
A recent open house (July 16) at the Museum showcased agricultural implements manufactured by the Ames Plow Company. The Ames Plow Company was a later incarnation of the Ruggles, Norse & Mason Company, established prior to 1835 in Shrewsbury, Mass. Over time the company grew and took over a space at Quincy Hall in Boston. In 1861 the existing partners were succeeded by Oliver Ames & Sons. Items advertised in their catalogue included carts, wagons, trucks, wheelbarrows, contractors' supplies, and ice tools. In 1866, a branch was incorporated at 53 Beekman Street in New York City. In 1874, a large new factory was built in Worcester, Mass. The firm was related to the Ames Shovel Company, also known as Ames Tool Company.



Hay cart found in a basement on Lincoln Street.
Manufactured by Ames Plow Company.



ZIP CODE 02334 — It certainly isn't the largest post office in the land, but this official postal service office on Poquanticuk Avenue has a zip code all its own.



THE POSTMASTER — Norma-Jean Hanscom, Easton Postmaster, sorts some mail for the 211 boxes she watches over every day. 1982

Old Furnace Village Post Office, 2 Poquanticut Ave. Norma Jean Hanscom served as Postmaster from 1973 until 1989. The neighborhood post office is currently located at Whistlestop Plaza.

In Memoriam

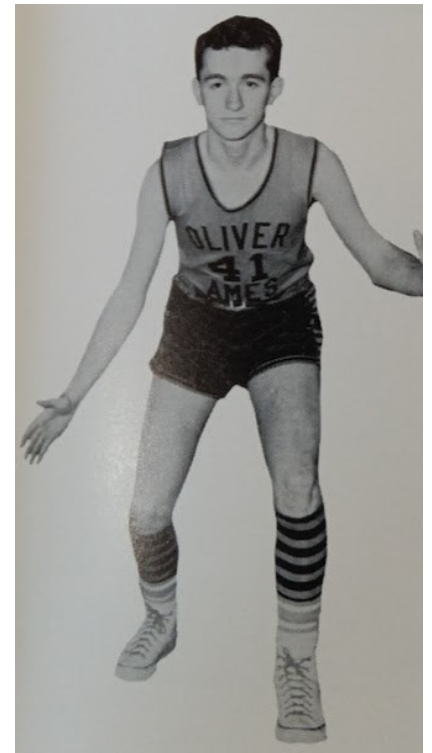
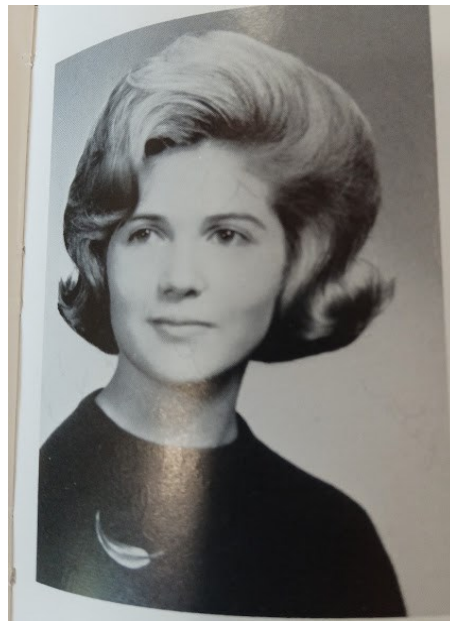
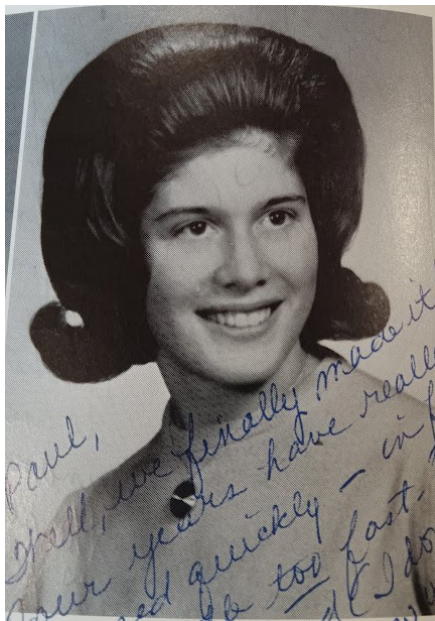
Lisa C. Duhamel, of Millis, MA, sister to EHS Director Joanne Duhamel England, passed away suddenly on August 5, 2023. Lisa graduated from Boston College with honors. She was a longtime member and current President of the Lions Club in Millis. She found great joy in traveling, especially European cruises, had a love of history and was a voracious reader. Lisa had an appreciation for music, theater, movies, and the occasional computer game. Her love of people and the invested way she engaged made her a great conversationalist and could always be counted on to reminisce with family and friends. She will be remembered for her strength of character, intelligence, and loving nature.

Lisa was the beloved wife of Ron Paulo of Millis and devoted mother of Andrew Irwin and his partner Sona of Millis and stepmother of John Paulo of Raynham and Michael Paulo of Warwick, RI. Loving sister of Joanne (Duhamel) England and her husband Kenneth of East Bridgewater. Cherished aunt of Shaun England, Chris England, Cara O'Hanley and great-aunt to Kevin, Megan, Connor, Ava, and Matthew. Honorary grandmother of Briana, Kiley, Alexis, and great-grandson Paul. Also survived by extended family and dear friends.

Donations

Financial donations were made by Jack and Nancy DeLuca and Bill and Leslie Mullen. Scott Pearsons donated a vintage scythe and lawn and tilt cart. Joe Piscitelli donated blueprints, Mack and Susan MacNevin, a newsboy pin, Mo Molander, a 1973 class picture, Paula Carlson, a 1972 class picture.

DO YOU REMEMBER?



One of our current Officers and two of our current Directors. Pics from 1964. Do you know who they are? Come to the October 22 Open House to see them!

Did you grow up in Easton during the 1950's, 1960's, or 1970's? Life was very different then in so many ways– from clothing, music, sports, technology, family life, and general culture. Come to our special Open House on Sunday, October 22 from 12:30-4:30 to view our exciting displays and reminisce about 'The Old Days'. Appropriate refreshments will be served!



Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
NO. EASTON, MA
02356
PERMIT NO. 25

Easton Historical Society & Museum
Post Office Box 3
80 Mechanic Street
North Easton, MA 02356
www.eastonhistoricalsociety.org
508-238-7774

