



EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Spring 2023

Volume 24, Issue 1

New Year, New School

January saw the opening of the new Blanche Ames Elementary School. The criteria for the naming of the new school were set by the school committee and the person whose name the school would bear should be someone who: would inspire students, represent local history, was relevant to all three former schools, and had been deceased for at least five years. Blanche Ames was chosen. An excellent choice.

Spring got a head start this year, green things are showing up extra early. A reminder that Sheep Pasture property is open daily. As winter turns into spring remember to take some time to enjoy the peace of nature.

Throughout March, you can visit significant historic sites in Massachusetts virtually, courtesy of the Tewksbury Public Library's collaboration with select National Park Service units in Massachusetts. See the Ames Free Library website for the link.

The 'House' is down at the Governor Ames Estate on Oliver Street. Many regular visitors miss seeing it as they walk the grounds. The property was once home to Oliver Ames, who served as Massachusetts' 35th governor, from 1887 to 1890. The original house was razed in 1937 some time after the Governor and his wife, Anna, passed, and later, in 1950, a new house was built in the footprint of the original. With support from the Town of Easton and the state's LAND grant program, The Trustees of Reservations purchased the property in 2012 from the David Ames family and Elizabeth Ames. That is the house that was recently torn down. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow said, "All things must change to something new..."

CALENDAR

Friday, March 17, St. Patrick's Day

Sunday, March 19, Open House, 11-4:30, Recognizing Easton's Little League origination in Spring 1953

Monday, March 20, Spring begins

Saturday, April 1, April Fool's Day

Thursday, April 6, Passover begins

Sunday April 9, Easter Sunday, and Sunrise Service at Sheep Pasture, 6 a.m.

Monday, April 18th, Patriot's Day, Boston Marathon

Saturday, April 22, Earth Day

Monday, May 14, Mother's Day

Saturday, May 20, Armed Forces Day

Monday, May 29, Memorial Day

Wednesday, June 14, Flag Day

Sunday, June 18, Father's Day

Monday, June 19, Juneteenth

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.

Remember When? A Special Request of Readers

Reminiscences co-editor Daniel Paré has written the following message seeking *your* recollections about Old-Time Radio:

Do you remember the days when radio was king? Share your memories of your favorite shows in the *Reminiscences* series!

The 1920s through the 1950s have been dubbed the era of "Old-Time Radio" or "The Golden Age of Radio." For decades, "tuning in" to your favorite show meant using just your ears instead of a TV set. Like TV today, elaborate radio dramas and comedies featured large casts, sound effects, and original music scores.

Police shows like *Dragnet*, soap operas like *The Goldbergs*, and even sci-fi like *Dimension X* were broadcast from coast to coast to eager audiences. Massachusetts comedians Fred Allen and Bob & Ray became national stars. Even after movie theaters had already featured the antics of Abbott and Costello, the cowboy heroics of Hopalong Cassidy, and the investigations of Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe the private eyes, these same characters enjoyed long runs on their own radio programs.

Radio spanned many genres, including quiz shows, live concerts, weekly music programs starring the likes of Benny Goodman, and cooking shows like *The Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air*. An episode of Orson Welles's live drama *The Mercury Theatre on the Air* created a historic uproar in 1938, when Welles and his team adapted *The War of the Worlds*, H.G. Wells' novel about Martians trying to conquer Earth. Reporting the "invasion" in a simulated news report, the show sounded so realistic that a lot of the audience mistook it for real breaking news.

As television became widely adopted, it began to displace the old system of radio drama. Some of the above-mentioned shows shifted to TV, taking advantage of its visual technology. The 1950s marked old radio's decline, with cancellations and shrinking budgets for once-popular shows. While radio drama has appeared sporadically over the last 60 years, 1962 is noted as the year when the very last of the Golden Age dramas went off the air, including *Suspense*, a thriller whose regular run launched in 1942.

Do you have memories of radio from those years? *Reminiscences*, EHSM's series of short memoirs and historical articles, will print its 14th volume this Fall, and we're looking to include comments, long or short, from readers who remember the Golden Age of Radio. To be considered for publication, send an email to Risotto77@yahoo.com and please include your name. Thank you for writing!

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

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A Special Visit

Easton based House of Possibilities day program members are full of historical facts and knowledge thanks to a recent tour of the Easton Historical Society. Outings like the Easton Historical Society and others are part of HOPE's community-based day program, which offers adults with developmental disabilities vocational skill-building, community integration, and recreational opportunities for up to 30 hours a week. Society Second Vice President Jon Coe poses below with group members during a recent tour. The Morse car and an old fashioned telephone were popular exhibits with these young people.

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A telephone from another era!

Jon Coe made some new friends. The Society welcomes visitors on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays when the OPEN flag is visible. Contact the Society to arrange special group tours.





FEBRUARY OPEN HOUSE

On display at the February Open House were items of a medical nature from Easton's past. The empty bottle in the left hand photo was once full of Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, which contained morphine and alcohol and was used to calm small children (!), clean teeth, freshen breath, and relieve constipation. Circa 1870, but outlawed in the 1930's. Above right is a doctor's bag and items that would have been carried inside. Circa 1947. The bag is 'Emdee' by Schell Leather Goods. In front are scissors for suturing and tweezers. A medicine rack with vials included is to the left. One vial is for treating whooping cough, another is ipecac.



YEARBOOKS!

February's Open House also included many interesting items connected to Easton schools. At least one visitor looked through the yearbooks and found themselves inside. There were yearbooks from both Center School and Parkview School.

With the opening of the new Blanche Ames Elementary School this past January it's nice to reflect on the closing schools- Center School, Parkview School and Moreau Hall, that served Easton's needs for so many years.

VERY EXCITING & COMING SOON!

The Easton Historical Society and Museum will have our monthly Open House featuring Easton's very first Little League baseball charter from 1952. This will be on Sunday, March 19th from 11:00-4:30 at our Museum. We would like to invite all, and especially the members of the very first teams that played and participated in the new League. A few guest speakers and displays of pictures of the very early days will be present. The first 4 teams in the league were: Fernandes (Supermarket), Lions (The Lions Club), Pioneers (The Pioneer Club), and Huskies (The Easton Huskies Club). All Little League games were played at Frothingham Park. A few years later Easton's Little League expanded to 6 teams with Howard's Insurance and Easton Pharmacy joining in.

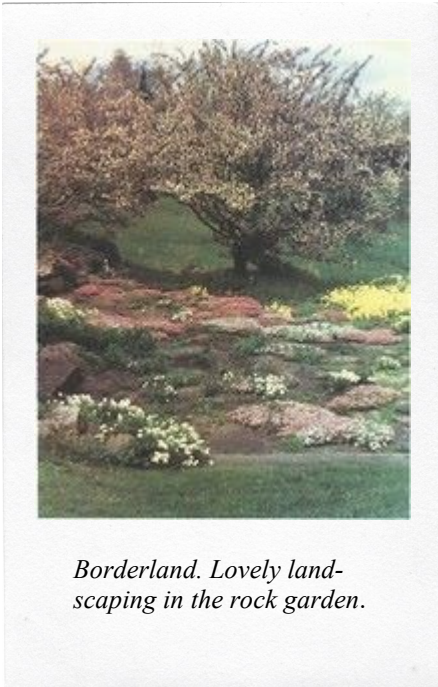
Below is a schedule of the 1953 season with names of all the players, coaches and leadership. There are so many familiar names and we urge all of them and their families to attend if possible. We will also have pictures, schedules from the 50's, 60's and beyond. We **are** looking for donations of any artifacts you may have that would add to this history. Hats, gloves, bats, helmets, pictures and uniforms for our display and archives. We looking forward to a very exciting day! Refreshments will be served.

Thank you,

Jonathan Coe (Howard's Insurance 1962-64)

EASTON LITTLE LEAGUE			
William A. Valente, President		Manuel J. Santos, Vice-President	
Joseph M. Hickey, Treasurer		Thomas E. Hickey, Equipment	
		Paul W. Roman, Secretary	
		Wesley M. Peters, Publicity	
LIONS			
FERNANDES			
No.	Name	Age	No. Name
1.	George Cravenho	9	1. George Randall
2.	Bruce Bowden	9	2. John Sullivan
3.	Michael Bengeman	10	3. Richard Lind
4.	Rickie Coe	10	4. John Downey
5.	Roger Baker	10	5. William Vandy
6.	Allen Bowden	11	6. Philip Sullivan
7.	David Berglund	11	7. John Carry
8.	Wiley Boone	11	8. Emery Peterson
9.	Philip Baker	11	9. Edmund Tingley
10.	Norbert Lyons	12	10. Lawrence Delgado
11.	Carl Fitch	12	11. Robert Johnson
12.	Charles McManamy	12	12. Gilbert Helms
14.	Richard Stevens	11	14. Robert Varney
15.	Donald Kelloway	12	15. Robert Silver
16.	David Elton	12	16. Russell Anderson
Mgr. Philip Baker Coach, Ralph Telfs		Mgr. Paul Roman Coaches, Thomas Lee and Robert Anderson	
HUSKIES			
No.	Name	Age	No. Name
1.	James Porter	10	1. David Holter
2.	Timothy Manning	11	2. Harold Holmes
3.	David Houde	11	3. Gary Sullivan
4.	Robert Pearson	11	4. John Conant
5.	Alan Porcaneau	10	5. Richard Robichau
6.	Timothy Marshall	9	6. Edward Lemah
7.	MusKanta Smith	12	7. Paul Kelley
8.	George Lake	12	8. Jake Wilde
9.	David Peters	12	9. Neal Rollins
10.	Roland Miller	12	10. Edward Mashon
11.	Peter Heller	10	11. Edward Robichau
12.	Joseph Fuller	11	12. Paul Rideout
14.	Daniel Bradley	11	14. Peter Galvin
15.	Richard Cobble	11	15. Donald Almeida
16.	Donald Cabral	12	16. Peter Mahoney
Mgr. Wesley Peters Coaches, George Holter and Ivor Miller		Mgr. Harold Holmes Coaches, George Randall and Richard Kent	

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ing



Borderland. Lovely landscaping in the rock garden.



Greenhouse and potting shed, Langwater, 1978. I can still remember the smell of the bone meal we mixed into the soil when potting young plants.

To the left, Oakes Ames at his microscope in 1941. At the time he was Director of the Botanical Museum at Harvard.

"Always it's spring and everyone's in love and flowers pick themselves."

E.E. Cummings

Spring is a good time to talk about flowers. Some are already arriving and others will be here soon. There are certainly many places around Easton where Spring flowers can be found, in both wild and cultivated places. Early Spring brings snowdrops at Sheep Pasture at the start of the Rhododendron Path. Early daffodils hide off the trail near the community gardens. At the Governor Ames Estate crocuses emerged early this year and budding daffodils spread over the slope near the Fish Pond. As I write this in late February, daffodils are in bud in several places. Before we know it lily-of-the-valley will arrive; lilacs before Memorial Day. Next bridal wreath and iris.



A peek at orchids inside Langwater greenhouse, 1978. I worked in the greenhouse while in college. This photo dates from then. Ivy and geraniums were grown in large quantities at the time.

"Oliver Ames (1864-1929) had the thatched Twin Cottages built for the families of two of his employees at "Sheep Pasture." The house was eventually given by the first Mrs. John S. Ames, Jr. to faithful Ames employees Everett Swanson and his wife." In 1980 it was sold to Stonehill College and became the home of the President of the college. 317 Washington Street, photo 1916.



IN MEMORIAM

Mary Elizabeth Romans of Easton, MA passed away peacefully on December 8, 2022, surrounded by her family. Mary was born January 28, 1968, to George and Maureen Comeaux in Stoughton, MA and moved to Easton shortly after that. A graduate of Oliver Ames High School and Stonehill College, Mary started her professional career as a Partner Marketing Representative for IBM, quickly moving up the ladder to become business partner and eventually an Operations Consultant for the software company Elron.

Mary then made a dramatic shift in careers to the world of education. She was a beloved math teacher and department head at Oliver Ames High School in Easton for the past 20 years. In that time, Mary mentored countless colleagues and new teachers. She was always willing to show up for anyone who needed her, earning her the nickname “Mother Mary.” In addition to the many lives she touched through her teaching, Mary served as an advisor to the Class of 2008 and to the OA Best Buddies chapter. In Mary’s eyes her greatest and most prized accomplishment was her family. A wonderful daughter, loving wife, inspiring mother, and selfless sibling, Mary is survived by her father George and partner Maureen; husband Christopher; daughter Emily; son Andrew and wife Hannah; brothers Dan, Chris and Tim Comeaux (and spouses); sisters Annie Sutton, Sarah O’Brien and Susan Powell (and spouses). She was also “Auntie Mary” to 18 adoring nieces and nephews and was the heart of a large closeknit circle of cousins, aunts, and uncles.

Susan E. Nixon passed away on Thursday, February 16th surrounded by her family. Susan was one of eight children raised in Easton, Massachusetts by parents William F. Nixon Sr. and his wife, Helen D. Nixon. A graduate of Oliver Ames High School Class of 1981, she attended Becker Jr. College in Worcester, Massachusetts majoring in Early Childhood Development. She enjoyed working professionally in the field of child care for several years.

Susan discovered her love for the care of children at an early age and spent her life giving generously of her time and resources to every child in her orbit. She had an extraordinary gift for making each one of her nieces and nephews feel special and important. Despite lifelong health challenges, Susan overcame seemingly insurmountable odds time and time again with great resolve, quiet dignity and sense of humor. She is survived by her father, William Nixon Sr; siblings, Deborah Nixon, William F. Nixon Jr., MaryAnne Nixon, Paula Perez and her husband Stephen, James Nixon and his wife Amy, Tara Didi and her husband Yaniv and several adoring nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her mother, Helen Nixon; her sister, Linda Nixon and her niece, Julie Anne Chesser.

DONATIONS

The Easton Historical Society and Museum currently has a moratorium on accepting donations while we reorganize our collections. Monetary donations are always welcome. Thank you for your understanding! An exception is Jon Coe’s call for Little League artifacts on page 4.

The following have made generous donations in honor of Hazel Varella.

These donations will help us meet the objectives of the Society which are to preserve, protect and interpret our town’s unique industrial, social, cultural, architectural, and environmental history. At the same time, they honor Hazel, who has been instrumental in the creation and growth of the Society. Since 1967 this incarnation of the Society has flourished under the stewardship of many, and Hazel is one who has always taken a leadership role. Her lifetime of service and tireless commitment is unsurpassed.

Donors: David and Sally Ames, Jim Carlino, Lisa and Fran Garcea, Francis Ialenti, John Leonard, Ken and Janet Michel, Duncan Oliver, John and Pauline Rebello, Edward C. Watson.

In addition, postcards and bookmarks were donated by Fred Ames, Peter Constantine donated newspaper articles from the elementary schools in the 70’s and 80’s, Rick Coe donated his 1962 Frothingham tennis tournament winning silver bowl and tennis racquet, the Easton School Department donated articles from Parkview and Center School. Mrs. Lois Dipasqua donated three tapes containing recordings of Easton Remembered Oral Folklore. Priscilla Almquist-Olsen donated six Growing Up in Easton DVD recordings. A monetary donation was received from Larry and Beth Abreu.

Donations are much appreciated!



Blanche Ames in contemplation at the home she designed, Borderland, which is now Borderland State Park. The Blanche Ames Elementary School opened in January of this year. Blanche Ames Ames (February 18, 1878 – March 2, 1969) was an American inventor, political activist, writer, cartoonist, artist, and supporter of women's suffrage. She was particularly known for her botanical illustrations.

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