

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# TRAIN TRACKS



## Annual Meeting News

Members and friends of the Easton Historical Society got together on Wednesday evening, May 24th for our annual meeting. It was held at the Olmsted / Richardson School.

A short business meeting was held. The Society elected a slate of officers and directors. New directors this year are Karen R. Cacciapuoti, Nancy DeLuca, James Morrison, Andrew R. Salisbury and Robert J. Wooster. The updated list appears below the Calendar on this page. Ken Martin presented the Society with a check for \$135 from the spring bottle drive. Although it was a very wet day, it appears that it also rained cans and bottles! Thanks to all of you who braved the weather to support us, and thanks to Ken and Ed Hands who braved the elements and made the event a success, rather than a washout. The board also sent a thank you and a token of our appreciation to Dot Berry, who has stepped down after many years of faithful service to the Society. Dot has served as President and has held other offices as well. She has also hosted the open houses for a number of years.

Dana Zaiser of Norton, a member of the Old Colony Civil War Round Table, gave a very informative talk about Civil War Tokens. He explained how tokens came about due to a shortage of change early in the war, causing merchants to mint these cheaply produced coins to be used as a substitute in fair trade. Dana gave many examples of these tokens. They range from very crude, basic designs to some that feature very well done engravings. He also talked about the numbering system used by collectors and showed some of the books on tokens that are available. Although Civil War tokens are relatively rare, they are not sought after to the extent that rare coins are, making them very affordable and collectable. Buyer beware, however, as copies of some of these are known to exist. Thanks Dana, for a great evening, and thanks to Walgreen's for providing refreshments!

Do you Google? A recent Google search on "Easton, Massachusetts" returned more than 193,000 results. If you have some time this summer, you might want to see what turned up! You can find the official Easton state website at the URL [www.easton.ma.us](http://www.easton.ma.us). There is also the [www.eastonmass.com](http://www.eastonmass.com) page, as well as [www.newenglandtours.org/massachusetts/easton](http://www.newenglandtours.org/massachusetts/easton) site. You will also find the Easton Police web site and the Stonehill College web site. There are many obscure listings as well. Have fun checking them out!

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### CALENDAR

*Sunday, June 11th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M.*

*Wednesday, June 14th, Flag Day*

*Tuesday, July 4th, Independence Day*

*Sunday, July 9th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M.*

*Sunday, August 13th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M.*

*Monday, September 4th, Labor Day*

*Sunday, September 10th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M.*

*Looking Ahead...*

*Sunday, October 1st, NRT Harvest Fair at Sheep Pasture*

*Saturday and Sunday, December 2nd and 3rd, Annual Lions Club Holiday Festival. Station open both days!*

*Easton Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly by the Easton Historical Society.*

*Officers:*

*Co-Presidents—Deborah MacPhee, Frank T. Meninno*

*1st Vice President—Kenneth J. Michel*

*2nd Vice President—Edmund C. Hands*

*Treasurer—Patricia A. Baker*

*Recording Secretary—Hazel L. Varella*

*Corresponding Secretary—Curtis H. Chase*

*Directors—Karen R. Cacciapuoti, Nancy DeLuca, James Morrison, Andrew R. Salisbury, Robert J. Wooster*

*Curator—Paul C. Berry*

## The Station Master

President Frank T. Meninno

Greetings to all of you fellow history lovers! I hope you have survived the record setting wet spring weather without any trouble.

First of all, I want to thank all of you who have donated towards paying off our loan on the heating system. Many of you have sent donations in a variety of ways, and I am personally very grateful for your continued generosity and support of the Society. I understand fully the need to be a good steward of what is entrusted to us. As a result, all the money collected so far for the loan has been paid to the Bank of Easton and we have been able to pay about 40% of the loan back ahead of schedule.

Secondly, we have just approved the design for the next glass ornament in our series depicting historic Easton buildings. This fourth installment will feature the H. H. Richardson designed Oakes

Ames Memorial Hall. I am pleased to announce that Mary Bodio, whose artwork has been featured on these ornaments, will be available during the December open house to sign your ornament. More details will be given later.

Many thanks to all of you who braved the wet weather and came out to support our spring bottle drive. We were able to raise \$135 thanks to your support. Special thanks to Ken Martin and his assistant Ed Hands for braving the cold, damp weather on the morning of the drive.

The April open house, titled "President's Choice" was a great success as we had nearly one hundred visitors. I chose to display never before seen photographs taken by Henry C. Belcher prior to 1900. Some of these featured members of the Belcher and Heath family, their homes and a few very rare photos from

Easton's past. Most of them were able to be identified by the photographers daughter, which makes the collection really special. There are a few gems taken throughout New England as well that display the photographers' keen eye and talent for creating dramatic pictures. If you missed the April open house, stop in over the summer and view these wonderful photos!

I want to extend a warm welcome to our newest board members: Karen R. Cacciapuoti, Nancy DeLuca, James Morrison, Andrew R. Salisbury and Robert J. Wooster. I look forward to working with them in the year ahead.

Lastly, due to some minor personal issues, I have not been as available as in the past. Deborah MacPhee and I will serve as co-Presidents this year. I am grateful for her help and enthusiasm, and her willingness to lend a hand.

## The Curator's Corner

Curator Paul Berry

The research group is currently meeting on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 to sort, identify and record a variety of things from our collection. Cataloguing our collection is an important part of our mission. We are looking for someone who might want to spend some time transferring these records onto a CD for computer use, utilizing Excel or some other type of database application (FileMaker Pro, for instance).

We are also in need of a few small display racks, especially the kind typically used in stores to display postcards, fold up maps or booklets. Table top sizes would work the best, but a small floor model would work well. Please call the Station at 508-238-7774 if you can help!

We recently received this note of thanks from the family of Mae Brooks:  
 “Robin and David Brooks would like to thank the friends of our mother, Mae Brooks, who acknowledged her 100th birthday. She was very moved, quite nostalgic, and deeply appreciative. We are grateful to you for making this special occasion even more so.”

### ***DO YOU KNOW?***

How well do you know your Easton history? Test your knowledge and see if you can answer the following questions.

- When is Easton’s birthday?
- How did Easton get its name?
- Who is recognized as the first settler in what is now Easton?
- Who came to Easton to purchase cannons for his Continental Army?
- In what year did Oliver Ames begin producing shovels in North Easton?
- Who wrote the History of Easton, Mass.?
- How many natural ponds are there in Easton?
- Where is the location of Easton’s first schoolhouse?
- How many H. H. Richardson buildings are located in Easton?
- What was the name of the first railroad in Easton?
- What naturally occurring phenomenon found in the Hockamock Swamp gives you a sinking feeling?
- What South Easton inventor held over 100 patents?
- What was the original name of Easton’s high school?
- Who is the first resident of Easton to practice the profession of law?

Did you get them all? Well done! If not, visit the Society this summer to get the answers!

This little gem, from an unidentified newspaper clipping dated March 12, 1954, was sent to us by Ms. Judith King of Farmington, Ct. Thanks for sharing it with us!

“Tricks of fate have been responsible for success or failure of many careers, but few would seem to be more interesting than the life history of Albert E. Wood of North Easton, Republican member of the House of Representatives now in his ninth year.

His grandfather was one of the whalers of long ago sailing out of Nantucket. After a huge whale had been harpooned in the South Seas it smashed the small whaling boat to bits and in the ensuing melee Grandfather Wood actually was held for a time in the thrashing whale’s huge mouth. He was a sort of modern Jonah. With intestines protruding from a gash in his abdomen and legs and ribs broken, the sailor was cared for to the extent possible and later put ashore in a crude hospital on Tahiti. He survived, was picked up by his own ship (he was first mate) weeks later and four years later Representative Wood’s father was born on another island thousands of miles nearer home—the Nantucket familiar to the “foreigners” from the mainland who visit in summer.”



**Poor Farm house and barn, Easton Center, prior to 1900.**

This is one of a series of photos taken by Henry C. Belcher of Easton, prior to 1900. He was a professional photographer until the family business, the Belcher Malleable Iron Foundry in Furnace Village, required his attention. He later moved to Vermont and became an engineer at a granite and marble quarry. You can see the rest of this collection during the summer open houses. They feature Belcher and Heath homes as well as excellent examples of early photography from the New England area. Check them out for yourself!

**EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



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