



EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Summer 2022

Volume 22, Issue 4

Full Speed Ahead!

Welcome back! After a long layoff due to the historic Covid pandemic, we are ready to re-open our Museum! We've been busy with a number of research projects during these two plus years. We've also been busy re-inventing our displays, and we have something really special in store for you. You won't believe your eyes when you visit us for our June Re-opening weekend. We hope you will be as excited as we are, and we think you will be. We will be open on Saturday, June 11th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Sunday from 1-5 p.m. We look forward to seeing you again as we explore more of Easton's rich history.

We will also begin holding our usual second Sunday Open Houses. Our Curator is preparing a special exhibit to whet your historic appetite in July. Our August Open House is one you will not want to miss! For the past year we have been very pleased to have Arielle Nathanson, a Rutgers University graduate student, working with us to organize collections, scan materials, and create finding aids for those collections. She has placed these on our website for researchers to utilize. Arielle will curate a very interesting exhibit based on her experience at the Museum. Please join us to hear about her discoveries and experience working with us and with our collections!

Soon we will begin planning for fall events, so keep your eyes open for exciting news. You can find news and exciting announcements on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram from the links on our web site. It will be good to get together again!

CALENDAR

All events are held at the Easton Historical Society and Museum unless otherwise noted.

Saturday and Sunday, June 11th and 12th, Grand Re-Opening Weekend at the Museum! We will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. Join us for a special weekend!

Saturday, June 4th, Happy Graduation to the Oliver Ames High School Class of 2022!

Tuesday, June 14th, Flag Day—Fly it proudly!

Sunday, June 19th, Happy Father's Day!

Tuesday, June 21st, First Day of Summer.

Monday, July 4th, Independence Day. Happy 246th Birthday, America!

Sunday, July 10th, Open House from 1-5 p.m. Discover Olmsted at 200!

Sunday, August 14th, Open House from 1-5 p.m. with guest Curator Arielle Nathanson.

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.

Curator's Corner - Curator / Caretaker Frank T. Meninno

"If you don't know history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree." — Michael Crichton

The above quote by Michael Crichton might sound a bit obtuse at first read, but I do not think it was meant to be read in such a critical light. Mathematics, science, language arts and technology are pretty important subjects (today's STEM focused education curriculums makes those subjects a top priority.) But it is the subject of history that roots us in our community.

All of us, regardless of our upbringing, social status, schooling, career, or level of success we achieve, long for a place to call home at the end of the day. When the work day or school day is done, and the extra-curricular activities are finished, where do we find ourselves? We look forward to getting home for the night, a place of comfortable familiarity. We find ourselves where we belong. But do we really know much about the place we call home? Do we take time to explore our street, discover our neighborhood (or for that matter, our neighbors?), or see what might be available to us for recreation or relaxation right where we live? People need a sense of community to thrive. Understanding how you connect to that community is where history can play a significant role. You will soon realize that you are indeed a leaf on a tree, a living, vital part of a canopy of branches to which we all belong.

I am a fourth generation Eastoner. My great-grandparents on my mother's side planted roots from Sweden in Easton soil. I have met some families who can go back twelve, maybe fourteen generations here. I have met many more whose families are contemporaries with my ancestors. I routinely meet families looking to put down their first-generation roots here as well. A common thread in understanding Easton is to learn her history. The founding of the town, understanding the Yankee families who first settled here, the beginning of our industrial heritage, the immigrants who later arrived and added their influence in so many areas of the town through strong neighborhoods, churches, businesses, and social clubs, helps us to identify with the Easton we see today. Witness the great Ames Shovel Company factories, the fantastic architecture, the special places and open spaces. Look deep and look beyond the bricks and mortar, the fields once plowed under, and consider the names and faces that make up our town today. Contemplate on those who laid the groundwork for all that you see and enjoy about what makes Easton special. And consider what your role should be here, what you will add to our story, and what you choose to leave as an example for future generations. Your story today will be someone else's history for tomorrow.

Do you really want to feel connected to your community? Take the time to learn its history. Make sure your leaf is firmly attached to the tree whose roots you planted.

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

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Reminiscences Volume 13 Coming This Fall!

Be on the watch for the next issue Reminiscences! Volume 13 continues the tradition of great historical writing, interesting topics, captivating photos, and fun facts. Reminiscences is funded with a very generous donation from Mrs. Carol Misiewicz in memory of her late husband Dr. Robert F. Misiewicz.

Museum Updates



New display cases with LED lighting will feature revolving exhibits such as the collection of children's toys on the left. On the right, Simpson Spring and the Pool Scientific Instruments are a focus of our manufacturing heritage. Other cases will display agriculture, sports, school, and music exhibits.



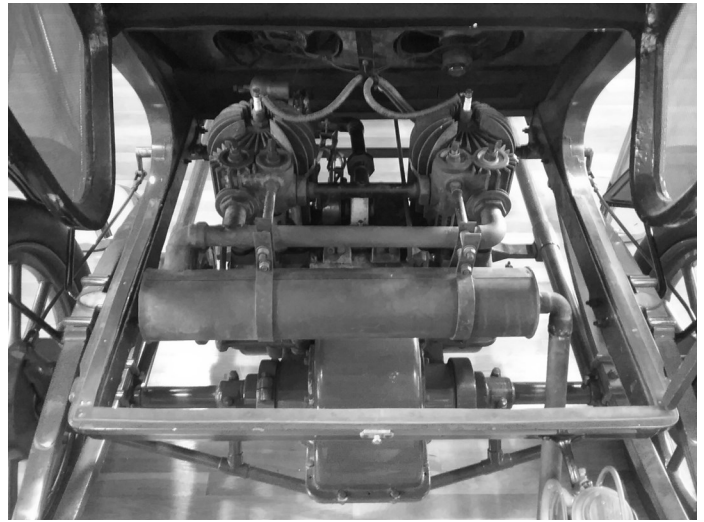
Above left, a new exhibit in the entry hall reminds us of the many changes in transportation, featuring trolleys, trains, and trucks; above right, a fully stocked retail area awaits your perusal. On the left are examples of entrenchment tools produced by the Ames Shovel and Tool Company. Further along this wall is a display of Ames shovels with information on how manufacturing processes changed over the years.



Introducing Our Newest Exhibit

We are thrilled to introduce our 1899 Morse Runabout! Donated by the late George H. Morse and Morse Brothers Cranberries in September 2020, the car is the centerpiece of a new industrial exhibit. Above, the front and rear of the car shows its stylish side, upholstered seats, rear engine cage, and brass kerosene headlights and brake light. Below, a closeup of the steering wheel gives you a clue as to how tricky it might be to drive this car. The bottom left photo shows the steering wheel in its normal position. The photo at bottom right shows the wheel in an upright position, revealing two levers on the steering column. One lever regulates the amount of gas given the engine, and the other advances or retards the spark to the spark plugs. Adjusting each of these two levers while in gear regulates your speed while driving.





Clockwise from above left: A brake pedal and clutch pedal protrude from the floor. The large black box is an oil reserve with lines to get oil to the top of the cylinders; the small box contains two coils to provide the spark to the engine; the two cylinder air cooled engine sits atop a planetary gear transmission. The muffler is original to the car; a round pedal acts as a step to enter and leave the car from the passenger side, and behind the fender is one of four leaf spring suspension units. A hand crank is supplied to start the low compression engine; a screened in rear enclosure houses the engine; a closeup of the suspension system; a look at the driver's side control area. Notice the lack of doors, windshield, or other protective equipment!



In Memoriam

Esther Doolittle Ames, of North Easton, Massachusetts, passed away peacefully at home on April 21, 2022, after a lengthy illness. The daughter of Lytton W. and Mary (Hunter) Doolittle, Esther was born in Providence, Rhode Island, on April 6, 1932, and attended the Gordon and Wheeler Schools in Providence and St. Timothy's School in Stevenson, Maryland, graduating in 1950.

Esther studied French language and literature at Pembroke College in Providence and spent her senior year in Paris, France, with the Smith College study-abroad program. After receiving her degree in 1954, Esther moved to Boston, where she worked for Harvard University and also spent several years organizing and leading youth travel programs in Europe.

On July 22, 1960, Esther and her late husband, Oliver F. Ames, were married in Providence, and then made their first home in Boston's Back Bay. In 1962, Oliver was elected to represent the Third Suffolk District in the Massachusetts State Senate, and his years in the Senate overlapped with the arrival of their five children between 1962 and 1971.

She was an enthusiastic traveler, a gracious hostess and outstanding cook, and enjoyed any opportunity to welcome guests to her homes. Esther was also an astute student of architectural history and a wide range of decorative arts, a lover of dogs (mostly small and feisty ones) and detective stories, and enjoyed swimming at least once a year. Her wit, charm and good nature enabled her to connect easily with people wherever she went, and her loyalty, integrity and kindness created a strong foundation for many life-long friendships.

Esther was a former director or trustee of Historic New England, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and Village Cemetery Corporation. She was a loyal volunteer for The Park School, the Fragment Society and many other organizations, and was a member of The Chilton Club in Boston and The Country Club in Brookline, MA.

Esther was predeceased by her daughter, Sarah, her husband, Oliver, and her siblings, William, Isabel, Abby and Duncan. She is survived by her children, Oliver, Jr. (Elizabeth Simmons Ames), of Dedham, Abby, of Boston, Samuel, of Boston, and Minnie (Brian Hirschfeld), of Brookline, and by her eight grandchildren and many loving nieces, nephews, cousins and godchildren. Her family is eternally grateful for the extraordinary care Esther received from the staff of Advantage Nursing, Mass. General PrimeCare, and Old Colony Hospice. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Esther's memory to St. Timothy's School, 8400 Greenspring Avenue, Stevenson, Maryland 21153, and the Lippitt House Museum, c/o Preserve Rhode Island, 957 North Main Street, Providence, RI 02904.

[Esther Ames Obituary - Boston, MA \(dignitymemorial.com\)](https://dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/esther-ames-obituary-boston-ma)

A memorial service for former Easton Historical Society Director Patricia Baker will be held on Thursday, June 23, at Unity Church. The service will begin at 6:30 p.m. A reception will follow the service.

Frederick Law Olmsted at 200

Landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted changed the way we view where we live. Born in 1822, this farmer took a month's long walk following the Civil War, and what he saw changed his life. At the age of 43 he embarked on a new career designing the outdoor spaces, national parks, and college campuses we are so familiar with.

This year there are a number of events around the country to celebrate the birth of this genius of space. You might know that Olmsted designed Central Park in New York City, or the Emerald Necklace of small parks and outside spaces in Boston. Do you know he also designed the grounds of Stanford University and Vassar College? Closer to home, Olmsted worked closely with Henry Hobson Richardson to transform North Easton from an industrial village into a welcoming gathering place where all could enjoy both the majestic structures of Richardson and Olmsted's careful supporting design. He also designed the grounds of the Easton Historical Society and Museum, and the Ames estates Springhill, Langwater, Sheep Pasture, and Queset.

For more information on Frederick Law Olmsted and his works, please visit the website Celebrating Frederick Law Olmsted - Parks for All People (olmsted200.org).

Donations

Priscilla Almquist-Olsen donated her mother's 1929 OAHs Class Ring, and oil paintings of Long Pond by Victor Lawson; **Paul Berry** donated photos of Easton houses, various news articles, the Rankin and F. S. Keith duck farms, and an article on Maurice Ames's singing reviews Musical America, Feb. 1937, Easton Bulletin, November 1981 advertising "Christmas at Queset", program for the groundbreaking ceremony at the Ames Shovel Works (2021), David Ames, Sr. newspaper obituaries and program from his memorial service, news clipping on the Ames Shovels featuring Martin McGovern, news clipping on the Ames Plantation, Fall River Line timetables from 1924, news clipping on Frothingham Park, 1930, and a photo of Washington and Turnpike Streets, and an early Simpson Spring advertising card; **Myrtle Blaisdell** donated a copy of The Enterprise announcing the death of President Kennedy, her 50th class reunion glass, two wire glove driers; **Cynthia M. Grant Jacobson** donated her father Clifford Grant's baby shoes, stockings, gloves, and layette, items from Clara Isabelle Gardner including an OAHs Class Pin from 1905, Graduation Exercise Program, class photo, 1901 Grammar School Graduation Program; **Jill Whiffen** donated History of Easton Vol. 1 + 2, Easton 250th and 275th anniversary books, Easton's Pictorial Past, Memories of 20th Century Easton, Easton Town Reports for 1962, 1974, 1980, and a copy of Smithsonian Magazine, October 1976 featuring Easton; **Phyllis Johnson Whitty** and **Arlene Robinson** donated many items from their father Joel Johnson's family including early Eastoners, World War I & II photos, newsclippings, class photos, and an autographed copy of the book Mad Ducks and Bears by George Plimpton; The family of the late **Buddy Wooster** donated Mary Bodio Frothingham Park prints, photos of Frothingham Park during the War Years, five hardcover novels by Pulitzer Prize winning writer John P. Marquand, all inscribed and autographed to Mary Slavin, who worked at Queset for the Ames family when Marquand was writing there, and a number of Easton history publications; **Gil Heino** donated an antique carpenter's folding rule and a commemorative coin from Easton's 250th anniversary; **Tom Coleman** donated a new American flag for our flagpole; **Dr. Stanson Moody** donated two copper print blocks used in the printing of the 1910 Morse Car Manual.

Financial donations have been received from **Robert and Jean Alger, Charlton and Eleanor Ames, Frederick L. Ames, John and Sarah Ames, Mary (Heidi) Ames, Robert Babineau, Harold Bailey, James Baker, Richard and Linda Beal, Barbara Beech, Leona Berglund, Myrtle Blaisdell, Michelle and Roger Blake, Cynthia Brown, Geraldine Brown, Suzanne Bump, Anne Marie Burke, Abel Camara, Mary Camara, Lewis and Evelyn Chapman, William and Beverly Carlson, Wayne and Sue Casey, Brad and Nancy Cohenno, George Comeaux, John Conant, Michael and Patricia Conley, Michael Corsini, Priscilla Crane, Charles and Ann Crivellaro, Lois DiPasqua, Carol Ferreira, Stephen and Joann Freitas, Anthony Fontes, John and Jennifer Fraone, Harold Gershman, Richard Grant, Sandra P. Greene, Owen and Hazel Hayes, Tom and Kathy Hohl, Betty Holmberg, Mark Ingalls and Sheri Anderson, Jim and Joyce Isiminger, Murdoch Johnson, James Kenneally, Harriet Lapin, Margo Lawless, Carol Leonard, Edward Leonard, Paul and Fran Marathas, Dr. Philip McCarthy, Leo McEvoy, Diane McNamara, Russ Meninno, Morse Insurance, Jack and Beth Mowatt, Bill and Leslie Mullen, Ben, Debbie, and Renee Neumann, Kathleen O'Connor, Barbara Ottmar and Peter Buhl, Ed, Bernadette, and Dan Pare, Patricia Parrie, Bonnie Porter, Elizabeth Porter, Elaine Rudd Reasoner, Paul Reilly, The Riveiro Family, Arlene Robinson, Lin and John Schuller, Matt Soeldner, Merrick Sokol, Susan Solomon, Ronald Somerville, Jean Sproul, Alan D. Swanson, John and Amanda Varella, Mildred Wade, Dr. Paul I. Weiss and Bryan Freehling, Dick Williams, Kevin and Hala Williams, Butch and Val Wood, Elizabeth Cuzner Wood, Ron Wood.**

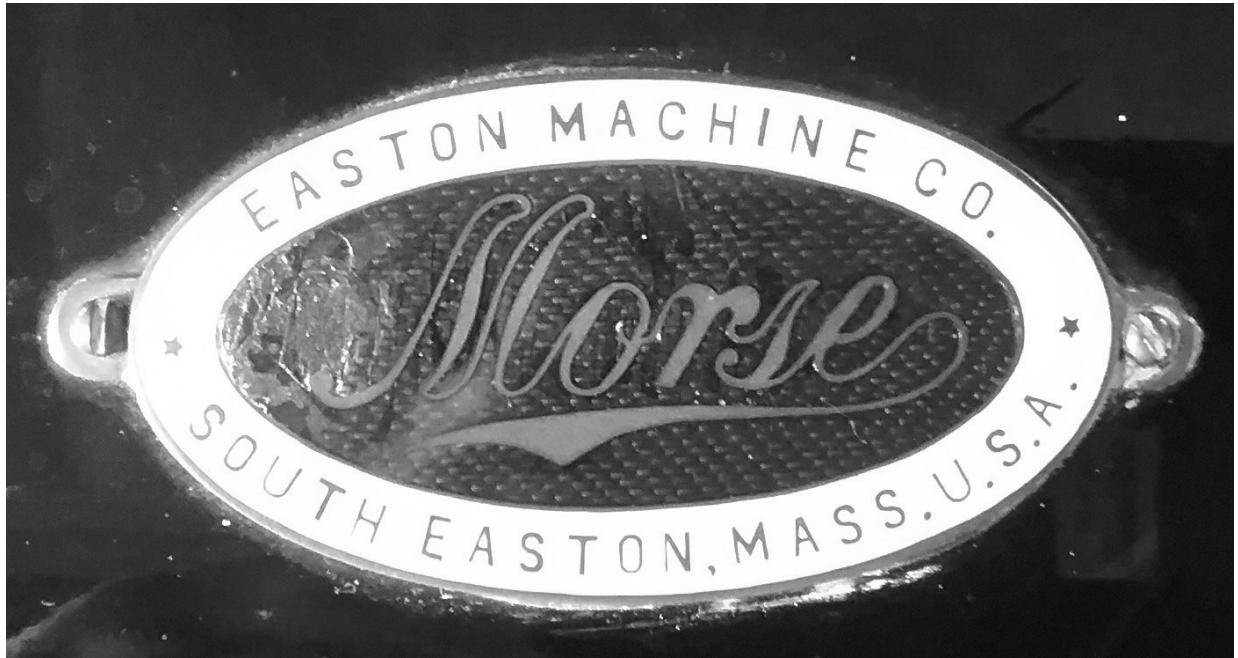
We express special thanks to the **King** family for a donation from the **Robert D. and Sally G. King Fund** which benefits the Society's operating expenses.

Jeffrey Simonson made a donation in memory of **Patricia Baker**. **Leslie and Marcia Hirsch** made a donation in memory of **Abraham and Mae Brooks**. **Terry Getchell** made a donation in honor of his wife **Barbara**. **Thomas and Judy Sabin** made donations in memory of **Albert Richard Greene, Jr.** and **Lambert Anderson**.

Hazel Varella, Carol and Duncan Oliver, and James Carlino made donations in memory of **Mrs. Esther Doolittle Ames**.

Leon Lombardi made a donation to cover the cost of reprinting a Boston Globe article in the next edition of Reminiscences.

Thank you for your generous support of the Easton Historical Society and Museum



This emblem represents some of the best engineering and manufacturing ever witnessed in Easton. The Easton Machine Company of South Easton produced a selection of highly specialized and complex machinery including lace making machines and taffy pulling machines. The gold Morse name in this distinctive script on a background of cobalt blue belonged to another fine machine—the Morse Car. Check out the center spread for more photos of our 1899 Morse Runabout!

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

