

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
1948-2008  
CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF HISTORY

TRAIN TRACKS



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

*The Easton Historical Society is 60!*

*Please join us as we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Easton Historical Society. The Gala celebrating 60 years of preserving Easton's history will be held on Saturday, September 20, 2008. The event will begin at 7 p.m. at Stonehill College's Alumni Hall.*

*There are several different items planned for the Gala. We will have a very special speaker for this important event. The evening will include music by the Brian Bigalow Band, hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, dessert, a raffle of 2 framed Mary Bodio prints, and a highlight movie presentation of the Society's 60 years. A selection of items from the Society's archives will also be on display.*

*Tickets must be ordered by September 10th. For tickets (\$30 each) and more information, please contact Nancy De Luca at 508-238-2165 or Karen Cacciapuoti at 508-238-9669.*

Volume 9, Issue 1

September 2008

CALENDAR

*Saturday, September 13th, Yard Sale / Bake Sale at the Station, 9 A.M. to 2 P.M.*

*Sunday, September 14th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M.*

*Saturday, September 20th, 60th Anniversary Gala, 7 P.M. at Stonehill College!*

*Saturday, September 27th, Great Oliver Ames High School Classes of 1929-1960 Reunion Station Open 2-4 P.M.*

*Sunday, September 28th, Dedication of Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Time T.B.A.*

*Saturday, October 4th, Bottle and Can Drive at the Station, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. Rain or Shine!*

*Sunday, October 5th, NRT Fair at Sheep Pasture. 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.*

*Sunday, October 12th, Open House at the Station 1-5 P.M. Speaker Dwight MacKerran on Oliver Ames at 2 P.M.*

*Sunday, October 19th, Fall Meeting at Queset, 2 P.M.*

*Friday, October 24th, Spooky Hay Ride leaving the Station at 7:30 P.M.*

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

*Holiday Open House Weekend and Easton Garden Club Green Sale. Saturday, December 6th from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. and Sunday, December 7th from 1-5 P.M.*

*Sunday, December 14th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M. Last chance for your historic holiday shopping!*

*The Easton Historical Society Newsletter "Train Tracks" is published quarterly by the Easton Historical Society.  
Officers: President—Deborah MacPhee, 1st Vice President—Kenneth J. Michel, 2nd Vice President—Edmund C. Hands,  
Treasurer—Patricia A. Baker, Recording / Corresponding Secretary—Hazel L. Varella  
Directors—Daniel B. Amorim, Karen R. Cacciapuoti, Nancy DeLuca, Andrew R. Salisbury, Robert J. Wooster  
Curator—Frank T. Meninno*

# The Station Master

President Deborah MacPhee

There is something to be said about anniversaries. Whether they are one year, five years, ten years or more, we gather with family and friends to celebrate something special, to reflect on the successes of the past and look into the future with excitement and anticipation. As we approach the celebration of the Society's 60th anniversary, I wanted to look back, reflect, and then peer into the future.

Looking back, I can see the groundwork laid out so long ago to bring us to where we are. Our first leaders had the foresight to get together, meeting in people's homes to gauge the public's interest in such a society. There are those who began holding public meetings to further increase awareness of our unique role in this town. Then there are those who began to part with long held treasures, donating them to something they saw as long-lasting and trustworthy. One cannot forget the role played by the Ames Free Library. They provided badly needed space to store our early collection until we had a place of our own.

Speaking of that, we certainly couldn't be who we are, celebrating who we are, without the support of the Ames family. We were an interesting, but homeless group, until 1969, when four members of the family (the late Mr. David Ames, Senator Oliver F. Ames, Mr. John S. Ames Jr, and Mr. William A. Parker) purchased the former Old Colony Railroad Station from the bankrupt Penn Central and presented it to the Society as a gift. What a vote of confidence! I can't imagine how many hours of labor, or how many dollar bills went into bringing the world famous Richardson building as far as it has come. I am grateful for each person who scraped paint, fixed windows, and cleaned, cleaned, cleaned! I wish I could thank them all.

Of course, I have to thank the untold number of people who have donated all types of things to make the Society what we celebrate this year. Members and friends have donated all types of items, supplies, food, time and money. There are untold hours of volunteering in many positions. Whenever we are in need, our members and supporters always rise to meet the challenge. That is a sign of true success!

Now, as we embark on the next part of our journey, I am excited about what the next year, five years, ten years will bring. What tales of success will we have to celebrate then? What exciting events are still to unfold? Whatever may come, I am glad that you are a part of them. Now, let's celebrate!

## Curator's Corner

Curator / Caretaker Frank T. Meninno

During the course of a week at the Society, I typically play several roles. Usually I introduce myself to others as the curator. Of course, other times I play the part of caretaker, fixing, cleaning, watering plants, whatever it might take to keep the building and grounds presentable and in good repair. However, there are times I play a third role: copycat. Yes, I am a copycat.

I know that the word copycat usually brings negative connotations to someone. Rest assured, however, that this does not apply here! One of the things we can do well is copy existing photographs and documents on site. Thanks to our members generous support, we have a very good photo quality copier in the office. This comes in handy two ways. First, it allows us to quickly provide copies of items for researchers who come in. The other situation where this really helps is when someone comes in with a photo to share but is not willing to part with it for various reasons. Since we can successfully copy most photo sizes, we can increase our archives even when the originals are too sentimental to part with.

A case in point deals with some photos belonging to a Plymouth woman who was researching her grandparents this week. She arrived with several precious family photos, all labeled, from the Herring family who lived on Randall Street, and later, Short Street during the late 1890's to about 1920. These photos have been left with us to copy for our records. Having the in-house capability to do this has made it possible to increase our knowledge and satisfy the researcher that her photos are safe. So you see, being a copycat can be a good thing!

The Society has received the sad news of the passing of honorary life member Dorothy (Keith) Berry on July 14<sup>th</sup> after a brief illness. As many of you know, "Dot" was an Easton native, and especially proud of her Unionville heritage. She was raised in Easton and was a 1939 graduate of Oliver Ames High School, and served as class secretary. Dorothy worked as a waitress from 1948-1961 at the former O'Connor's News Store on Main Street. She was also a bank teller from 1961 -1984 for what is now the Bank of Easton, formerly the Easton Co-operative Bank.

At the Society, she held a number of positions including president (1983-1986; 1999-2002), treasurer, first vice-president, recording secretary and membership secretary. She was a director from 1970-2006, giving 36 continuous years of service to your Society. She was an ever present hostess at open houses and tours, and she helped to plan many events such as the centennial celebration of the former railroad station (1984) and assisted in developing several publications such as Looking Back at Easton, Massachusetts and Memories of Twentieth Century Easton. Dorothy is survived by a son, former Society curator Paul Berry of Easton; a brother, Harold Keith and his wife Mary of New York; a son-in-law, Joseph Boggs of CT.; two grandchildren; a niece and a nephew. She was also the mother of the late Joan Boggs.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Twice Told Tales by Hawthorne, 1919; Tales of the Observer, Jordan Marsh Company; Webster's Dictionary, 1949; Easton Lumber Company blotter; Child's gloves that once belonged to Harland Almquist; War Ration books; a hand stitched silk purse; a kitchen utensil; all donated by Priscilla Almquist Olsen, Esq. A number of early Easton Historical Society items including a copy of Growing Up at Sheep Pasture signed by Mrs. Parker; an H.H. Richardson tour brochure from 1968; Simpson Spring prints; a poster for the Society's 10th annual auto meet; Citizen's Guide to Easton; several boxes of slides, aerial photos taken by Lyn White; donated by Ed and Lyn White. Book-Natural Prayers by Chet Raymo, donated by Chet and Maureen Raymo. A large collection of vintage sheet music, both classical and popular, dating from the late 1800's to the 1940's; Book-Independent National Music Reader used in Easton schools, 1886; Book-Towns of New England, Old England, Ireland and Scotland, 1936; Laminated article about Connie Spillane; 2 black and white framed photos of the barn at 300 Center Street, taken by Peter Nawrocki, 1979; donated by Charles and Alice McCarthy. Collection of 250th Anniversary envelopes with cancels, donated by Mary Ada Sundell. Bottle-Spirit of Turpentine bottle from Ernest Spooner, Druggist, donated by Janice Brockman. Class of 1966 memorabilia, including yearbook, graduation invitations, graduation program and news clippings, donated by Ed Hands. Oak and glass chemist scale, circa 1900, donated by Ron Danielson. Photo of Joe Garsha, taken 1926 at Long Pond; matchbook cover advertising John S. Ames Jr. for Governor's Council, 1949; donated by Ron Somerville. Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary Program, 1930, donated by Jon Gilmore. Advertising billfold, late 1800's, donated by David Brooks. Wood bookcase, donated by Daniel B. Amorim. Step stool and folding table, donated by Georgina Dickinson. Photo album of the Barrows family, circa 1880, donated by Mark Upton. "O" scale trains, one a Lackawanna line passenger line, the other a Boston and Albany freight line, donated by Edward J. Coogan. Chas. A. Slavin "Flyaway Farm" milk bottle; large G. G. Withington medicine bottle; 9 color postcards that belonged to Peter and Mary Peterson, grandparents of the donor; donated by Brenda Peterson Sabin. 1941 town report; North Easton Savings Bank passbook, 1937; donated by Diane Peterson. Medium size G. G. Withington medicine bottle, donated by Theresa McAndrews. Oliver Ames Memorial book, 1898; Published sermon, Religious History of Easton, Massachusetts, 1905, by Rev. William Chaffin; Sign, Easton & Mansfield, in gold lettering, possibly from one of the old street trolley lines; donated by Janice Hatchfield Lyttle and her husband William G. Lyttle. Photograph-Class of 1916, Oliver Ames High School, with names on reverse, donated by John and Pauline Kirsh through Myrtle Blaisdell.

**The Easton Historical Society is grateful for the continued generosity of the donors of these and other historical items to our collections.**

## EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY FALL EVENTS

Your board has been hard at work this summer planning some exciting events for the fall. We hope you will take the opportunity to be part of these events. Make sure you mark your calendars with these dates!

### *Yard Sale*

We are having a yard sale at the Station on Saturday, September 13th, from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. Space is still available for you to part with some of that "stuff" you gathered over the summer. A donation of \$15 reserves your spot!

### *Great Oliver Ames High School Reunion*

The classes of 1929-1960 will be touring the Society from 2-4 P.M. on Saturday, September 27th.

### *Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Dedication*

The memorial for the veterans of the Vietnam War will be dedicated on Sunday, September 28th. Time to be announced. The Society will be open following the dedication. Watch the local papers for details.

### *Fall Bottle and Can Drive*

We will hold our fall bottle and can drive on Saturday, October 4th, at the Station from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. All clean returnable bottles and cans are welcomed. We will be here rain or shine! For large pickups, please call Ken Martin at 508-238-2185. Proceeds will go towards the restoration of the ceiling of the Women's Waiting Room. Thanks to Ken and Ed Hands for running this important fundraiser, and thanks to all of you who faithfully contribute!

### *NRT Harvest Fair*

Join the Society on Sunday, October 5th at the annual NRT Harvest Fair, at Sheep Pasture, Main Street, North Easton. The fair opens at 10 A.M. Our booth will feature a display of Easton memorabilia as well as a chance to purchase publications. We look forward to seeing our members and friends. Be sure to drop by and say hello!

### *Open House with Dwight MacKerron*

Our October 12th open house, from 1-5 P.M. will feature Stoughton Historical Society president Dwight MacKerron, who will speak on Oliver Ames. Dwight is scheduled to speak at 2 P.M. Join us for an interesting afternoon and refreshments.

### *Fall Meeting at Queset*

On Sunday, October 19th, the Society will hold our fall meeting at Queset House, the former estate of Oakes Angier Ames. Queset is located behind the Ames Free Library. Built around 1854 in the style of noted architect Andrew Jackson Downing, it is now owned and used by the Ames Free Library. The meeting will begin at 2 P.M. Speakers will be Hazel Varella, Ed Hands and Frank Meninno. They will talk about the house, the gardens and the people who lived in the house. Walk the garden with Ed Hands. Don't miss this opportunity to take in a wonderful fall afternoon in a great setting!

### *Spooky Ride*

On Friday night, October 24th, join us for a hay ride of a different spirit, as Ed Hands spins tales that will send a chill up your spine! Reservations are needed for this truly "spooky ride" as the wagon only holds 40 people. Preference will go to our members before being advertised. Cost is \$5 per person. The ride departs from the Station at 7:30 P.M. and returns around 8:30. When you return, join us inside for some warm hot chocolate! Call Hazel Varella at 508-238-3614 to reserve your seat!

### *November Open House*

The November open house will be held on Sunday, November 9th from 1-5 P.M. and will honor our veterans. You will find on display a variety of photos and items relating to our Easton veterans from the Civil War to the present.

### *December Open Houses*

It is that time of year again-holiday shopping time! The Society will be open during the annual Easton Lions Club Holiday Festival and lighting of the Rockery. On Saturday, December 6th, we will be open from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., and our special guest will be the Easton Garden Club. They will have their annual greens sale at that time. Be sure to stop by and see their wonderful work! Thanks to the Garden Club for decorating the station. Sunday, December 7th, we will be open from 1-5 P.M. We will have a bake sale both days, so dust off those cake pans! Our last open house for the year will be held on Sunday, December 14th, from 1-5 P.M. More details will appear in the next issue of Train Tracks, and the local newspapers.

### Mae Brooks Bequest Received

The Easton Historical Society recently received a bequest from the estate of the late Mae Brooks. Mrs. Brooks and her husband Abraham were long time members and supporters of the Society, especially during our formative years. Even in her advanced age of over 100 years she enjoyed getting the newsletter and hearing what the Society was doing. She felt very close to the Society and our members, and it was a great honor to have been associated with her. We wish to extend our sincere thanks to the Brooks Family, particularly David and Robert ("Robin").

### Family History Request

Genevieve Leavitt of Arizona and Andrew Leavitt of Georgia are seeking information on their great-grandparents and grand parents. Their great-grandfather is Joseph Napoleon Boudreau, who worked at our building as station agent / conductor from 1907 to his death in 1920. His wife was Anna Boyd Boudreau. The Leavitt's grandparents are James Lawton Boudreau (1900-1970, O.A.H.S. Class of 1919) and Gladys Mary Doran Boudreau. Their daughter, Shirley Anne Boudreau (born 1929) is the Leavitt's mother. Shirley graduated from O.A.H.S. in 1947, and designed the yearbook cover. The Boudreau's were members of Immaculate Conception Church in Easton, and lived for many years on Pond Street.

If you have any information on these people, stories, photos, or any other remembrances, please drop the Society a note via email, phone call or letter. We will get the information to the Leavitt family. Thank you!

### 1835 Newspaper Gives Ames Shovel Company Coverage

A recent acquisition has shed some light on the activity of the Ames Shovel Company early in it's history. The following article is taken from the March 7th, 1835 issue of the Columbian Register. The Register was a daily publication from New Haven, Connecticut specializing in business news and published the political laws of the United States. The fact that the Ames company was making news of this level this early is an example of just how far they had come since establishing their North Easton factory in 1803. Thanks to Bob Vogel for bringing this to our attention. Here is the article as it appears in the paper:

#### Ames's Shovel Works in Massachusetts

There is a great deal of Yankee enterprise in old Massachusetts. Perhaps no state goes before her in the extent and variety of manufactures, compared with the amount of population. There are many instances of individuals in that state starting from small beginnings, and rising to wealth and eminence by their enterprise in manufacturing establishments. A striking instance of this kind is found in the shovel works of Oliver Ames. A correspondent inform us that he commenced the manufacture of shovels when young, and carried on the business in quite a humble style. When he had finished a few dozen of shovels, he would pack them into a one horse wagon and carry them off to market. Now he has three extensive shovel factories, one at Easton, where he resides, one at Braintree, and one at West Bridgewater, and gives employment to three four-horse teams to carry his shovels to market. He has in his factories nine *tilt hammers*, which weigh about four tons apiece, and each cost from \$1500 to \$2000. His works turn out about forty dozen shovels a day, and that is not sufficient to supply all the orders he receives. He employs about sixty workmen constantly. Each shovel goes through about twenty different hands. He pays his workmen from twelve to fifty dollars a month. His works cost upwards of \$75,000. His profits are probably from 15 to \$20,000 a year. So much for individual enterprise. Yankees of Maine go and do likewise. Portland Daily Courier.

As you can see, Oliver Ames's investment of \$1600 to purchase a bankrupt furnace and house on Pond Street was paying dividends. Of course, his business savvy and manufacturing skills didn't hurt either!

# THE GREAT HURRICANE OF 1938

It went by many names-The Long Island Express, The Long Island Clipper, The Great Wind Storm. It arrived on an otherwise uneventful fall day, with little or no warning other than some ominous looking cloud cover. When it was over, it left in it's path great destruction, and even death. I am talking about that storm now commonly known as the Great Hurricane of 1938.

September 21st, 1938, will forever be remembered as one of the most destructive days Easton has ever seen. The full brunt of the storm was borne during the afternoon and evening hours. It was a fast moving storm, moving through the area in four or five hours. Once darkness fell upon the town, all one could hear was the sound of the wind, breaking trees, shingles and shutters being blown off of houses, and small buildings being blown down. The electricity, phone system and fire alarm system was down by late afternoon as trees and branches crashed through lines all around the town.

The aftermath was difficult to comprehend. More than five-hundred shade trees were either uprooted, or damaged enough to require eventual removal. Hundreds more would need significant tree work to save them. The north, central and eastern parts of Easton were the most severely damaged. Nearly all the trees at the high school, North Easton Grammar School and the South Easton school were destroyed. School building damage from the storm totaled more than \$250. In total, the town lost over 600 trees by early 1939.

Easton did have some badly needed assistance at hand, in the form of the Works Progress Administration, or W. P. A., which at the time of the storm employed over 100 people here. Coupled with the efforts of town departments, and the help of innumerable private citizens, a great cleanup effort was begun to clear the streets in town. This effort was so intense that nearly all debris was removed from the streets by 1:00 A.M. on the 22nd, allowing for traffic and emergency vehicles to pass.

The rest of the cleanup took considerably longer. The W.P.A. and town workers began the task of removing downed trees and brush from the roadsides. The fire department, which kept it's employees on duty for days, burned brush in dumps and along the roadsides, allowing the other workers to clear areas faster. Homeowners cut up town trees that fell on their property, saving untold hours of work for town employees. Work was begun immediately on restoring the fire alarm system in North Easton. Electricity and phones would take significantly longer to restore, a week or more in many cases.

By the end of the year, over 300 trees were removed. Hundreds of trees had limbs cut, and hundreds of stumps were removed. The cleanup cost which was in excess of \$16,000 (1938 figure) was paid for by the W. P. A. and federal funds. To put that cost in perspective, it cost more to cleanup the hurricane damage than it did to fund both the fire and police departments for the entire year.

As I mentioned earlier, the hurricane was a deadly storm. During a lull in the storm, 74 year old Johanna F. Carlson went outside of her home in the Swedeville area of North Easton (Seaver St., Jenny Lind St., etc.) to look around. A sudden gust of wind arose and blew some loose bricks off of a chimney, striking her on the head and fracturing her skull.

The information in this story was taken from the 1938 Easton Town Reports written by Selectmen Edgar W. Baldwin, Augustus Hopkins and Alphon N. J. Carlson, Tree Warden Roscoe W. Melendy and Fire Chief Cornelius P. Dailey.

As we remember the 70th anniversary of this incredible storm, we ask that you would submit your remembrances of it to us for our archives. Take a few moments to write down what you remember, or what other people might have told you about the hurricane. Those personal stories have much to offer, and are easily forgotten if they are not told. Maybe you have some photos tucked away somewhere that would help to tell the story. Consider sharing what you have, so that when the 100th anniversary comes around thirty years hence, we can have a more complete picture of the nature of this event through the eyes of those who lived it. Your history is part of our town's history. Please contribute!

## 2008 Easton Ornament Is Coming!

The Society is pleased to announce the newest addition to our very popular glass ornament series. The 2008 ornament features the archway at the F. L. Olmsted designed Rockery. Reproduced from the artwork of well known watercolorist Mary Bodio, the scene depicts the view looking south through the arch, with the iron fence of the original Oliver Ames High School in the background. Use the form below to reserve your order in time for the holiday season. Your orders can be picked up at the Station during the December open houses. Remember, quantities are limited!

Mary will be at the Society on December 7th to sign your ornaments.

The Society is very grateful to Mary Bodio for allowing us the use of yet another one of her wonderful original artworks, and for her time to sign ornaments. Thank you, Mary!

*\*\*\*\*\* We still have some of the first five ornaments in the series available. They feature Mary Bodio's wonderful artwork depicting the five H. H. Richardson buildings in North Easton. If you haven't begun to collect these beautiful ornaments yet, or have missed a few issues from prior years, there is still time to get the full set. Call us for details! \*\*\*\*\**

### Ornament Order Form

Please use this form to reserve your limited edition 2008 Mary Bodio ornaments. Make checks payable to Easton Historical Society, and send to: Mrs. Hazel Varella, 121 Center Street, North Easton, MA 02356. The Society thanks you and appreciates your continued support!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City & State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Number of single ornaments \_\_\_\_\_ X \$10 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sets of four ornaments \_\_\_\_\_ X \$36 per set \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## WHO AM I?

*We don't know! We can use your help. We have in our archives many photos of people without names. We will feature some of them in this and upcoming newsletters.*

*Can you identify the gum blowing darling in this photo? The girl, probably between 8 and 10 years old, was photographed by well known Easton photographer Joe Lyons at an Easton Huskies field day at Frothingham Park. This photo was taken in 1947.*

*If you think you know the identity of our mystery girl, or anyone else in this photo, please let us know. You can email us at [curator@eastonhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:curator@eastonhistoricalsociety.org), or you can drop a note in the mail or leave us a phone message.*

*As always, thank you for your help!*

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



P.O. Box 3, 80 Mechanic Street  
North Easton MA 02356

508-238-7774

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