

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TRAIN TRACKS



Volume 11, Issue 1

FALL 2010

CALENDAR

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

Sunday, September 12th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M. Program TDB.

Saturday, September 18th, Yard Sale, 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. Rain date September 25th.

Monday, September 27th, Joint Society and Ames Free Library-Easton's Public Library meeting with Ken Gloss with free verbal appraisals. Program at the library, 6:30 P.M.

Sunday, October 3rd, NRT Harvest Fair, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Drop by and visit us!

Saturday, October 9th, Fall Bottle Drive, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.

Sunday, October 10th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M. featuring an archaeology program.

Saturday, October 23rd, Spooky Rides. Form inside!

Monday, November 8th, 7 P.M. Gerald Beals talk on electricity and electrified trolleys. North Easton Savings Bank, 20 Eastman Street.

Sunday, November 14th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M. Train Day!

Coming soon...

New book—Reminiscences

Holiday Fair, December 4-5, Holiday Open Houses and Garden Club Sale.

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.

Reminiscences

The Easton Historical Society has been fortunate to have been given many resources. From these, we are pleased to announce our newest book offering—the initial volume of Reminiscences, a collection of writings and articles from our archives that documents our heritage in Easton. The Research Committee, which has been hard at work sorting our collections, have chosen some interesting items to share with you. The book is approximately sixty pages, and contains eleven pictures.

The first article provides an unusual perspective on town historian Rev. William L. Chaffin, prepared for a 1951 Historical Society meeting. Our early history is reflected in the article about one of our first doctors, Seth Babbitt, and a description of Easton's role in the American Revolution. Also, the roles of the Ames General Store in North Easton and the Swift Brothers Store in Furnace Village provide insight into early business. Another fascinating article describes the weather during the key storms of the 1800's.

Family histories provide valuable information about not only the members of the family but also the life in Easton that they experienced. The early childhood of Annie Lawton Wilbar appeared in the April 1977 Easton Historical Society newsletter. Also chosen for this booklet are Joseph and Julia Lyons Connolly, whose childhood struggles occurred in the early years of the twentieth century.

Support for Easton's military has always existed. An example of this commitment is documented in one of the letters sent by the Lebanon Lutheran Church (now Holy Trinity Lutheran Church) to its members serving in World War II.

Continued on page 3

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—Nancy DeLuca, Recording / Corresponding Secretary—Hazel L. Varella

Directors—David Ames, Jr., Patricia Baker, James MacPhee, Debra Salisbury, Robert J. Wooster

Curator—Frank T. Meninno

The Station Master

President Deborah MacPhee

Soon the leaves will be changing and the air will be getting cooler. As with the changes in the season, there will be some changes at the former Old Colony Train Station. A restoration project of the station will soon be underway.

The restoration project will begin with updating the electrical system in the Station. A new electric box will be installed in the kitchen. David Anderson Electric of South Easton will be providing the work for the new electrical system.

Folan Waterproofing and Construction of South Easton will complete the next phase of the project. To make sure there are no more leaks in the ceiling of the ticket office, the chimney will be re-mortared and a cap will be installed inside the chimney.

The next step in the project is the repair of the roof and the gutters. G. Arthur Moberg and Sons of Brockton will be replacing any broken or missing slate on the roof. The gutters will also be repaired and a new downspout will be installed on one side of the front archway.

The final stage of the restoration will be the refinishing of the ceiling in the entry way, Ticket Office and Women's Waiting Room. After the ceiling is complete, the cracks in the walls will be repaired. A new coat of paint on the walls will give the Station a fresh new look.

Thank you to all of our members and to Ken Martin, who has held countless Bottle and Can Drives, for all of your generous donations through the years. This project would not be possible without your generosity.

Make sure to stop by the Station for an upcoming open house or event and see how the restoration is coming. We look forward to seeing you!

Curator's Corner

Curator / Caretaker Frank T. Meninno

Picture perfect—that is one phrase that describes our wonderful museum! One recent Saturday, I was at the station most of the day preparing for an open house. I left for half an hour to pick up refreshments for the next day. Upon my return I found a young lady dressed in white and laying on the pavement! Just as I was approaching her, a woman with a camera appeared and began photographing her. As I turned the corner of the building, I saw several other young ladies dressed the same way, along with a makeup person and another assistant. It turned out that these aspiring models were part of a shoot for a bridal magazine. They all loved our building and thought it made a great backdrop for their photo shoot.

This is not an unusual event. There are many times when I find models having their photos taken at our location, photos that will be included in their portfolios (I always ask them to remember us if they become famous!). Sometimes a person with an antique car or hot rod will park in front of the building to snap a few photos. A local folk rock band recently took some promotional photos there as well. And then there are the times when I watch as a minivan stops, a family of children fall out from it in a heap, run to a nice spot in front of the building or stand around the great sycamore tree in front, and a parent snaps pictures that will become their holiday greeting cards. Smiling kids, a great background, and another memory made. What more could one ask for? Now...smile!

Reminiscences, from page 1

We also trace the amazing journey of a school bell that has been moved at least five times and is now on permanent loan from us to the V. F. W. Pvt. George F. Schindler Post #2547. When reading about the bell, one will also learn about a structure at the corner of Highland and South Streets that has served three completely different purposes: school, church and private residence.

The final section is a brief overview of the Easton Historical Society, from a list of charter members in 1948-9, to its 60th anniversary celebration on September 20th, 2008, in Alumni Hall at Stonehill College. The gala honored all who had assisted in the evolution of the Society. Curator Frank Meninno had a display of the growth, and Edmund Hands showed an extraordinary Power-Point presentation of the history. Brief presentations were made by Mrs. David Ames and Mrs. M. David Varella.

Copies of the book will be available in time for our joint meeting with the Ames Free Library on September 27th. You can also pick one up at the Society booth at the NRT Harvest Fair in October, and during the Holiday open houses. If you would like a copy sent to you, please call or write the Society for more information.

The Society is deeply indebted to Daniel P. Paré, who not only prepared all the materials for this publication, but also edited what was appropriate. Original newspaper articles were not edited except to typographical errors.

“Extraordinary History of Electricity in the Greater Brockton Region”

Easton resident Gerald Beals will present a program titled “Extraordinary History of Electricity in the Greater Brockton Region” on Monday, November 8th. The presentation will include a history of electrified trolley cars which originated in Brockton. Frank Julian Sprague, who worked with Thomas Edison, experimented with electric motors which contributed to the development of electrified trolleys. Mr. Beals is a retired educator, regional author and curator emeritus of the Brockton Historical Society. He is also the author of ThomasEdison.com, which has received over 30 million hits in the last ten years, and invites program attendees to peruse that website prior to attending the presentation.

The presentation will be held at the new corporate offices of the North Easton Savings Bank, 20 Eastman Street. Bank Senior Vice-president and Society member Karen Carter will be our hostess for the evening. Due to space limitations, you are encouraged to call Hazel Varella at 508-238-3614 to reserve a space. After October 15th the program will be open to the general public. For those who would like a tour of the facility, please come at 6:30 P.M. For those who have had a tour, refreshments will be served at 7 P.M. and the program will begin at 7:20. The doors will be locked at 7:10.

The Society was honored August 8th to have Anna Lee Ames Frohlich, the great-great-granddaughter of Congressman Oakes Ames, present an extraordinary visual program “The Lonely Pyramid on Sherman Hill” (Wyoming). Mrs. Frohlich’s depth of research on this monument honoring the accomplishment of Oakes and Oliver Ames was definitely evident as she documented the history of the Ames brothers, the development of the Union Pacific, and the decision to create the monument at the highest point of the Union Pacific, approximately 7000 feet above sea level. Her enthusiasm and her concern about the future preservation of the monument highlighted the afternoon’s program. For those who live in Easton, you will have the opportunity to view Mrs. Frohlich’s presentation on the local cable channel.



John S. Ames, Jr.

One Special Patriot

One can sometimes find interesting quips in surprising places. Such an instance occurred the other day. While reading John S. Ames, Jr.'s obituary, it mentioned his playing a role in the Boston Patriots Football Club. A letter was sent to the New England Patriots, which reply was awaited with great interest. They did not disappoint! It turns out that Easton's Mr. Ames was one of the original ten owners of the club in 1959.

John S. Ames, Jr. was a lover of sports, and was as well known in sports circles as he was in financial circles. Evidently the opportunity to invest in the fledgling American Football League club was very appealing to him. He, along with Billy Sullivan, Joseph Sullivan, George L. Sargent, L. Edgar Turner, Daniel F. Marr, Dean Boylan, Paul Sonabend, Edward McMann, and Dom DiMaggio put up the initial funds to get the team off the ground. A write-up done by John Needs of the Taunton Daily Gazette states "if the business and non-business successes of Ames can be used as a criterion, the Patriots should make an excellent showing on the gridiron during the coming season...". He goes on: "Ames has had success with practically everything he has tried and gridiron followers hope the magic spreads to the football field and The Boston Patriots."

John S. Ames, Jr. (died 1973) did not live long enough to see the recent successes of the Patriots, and the early seasons were rather frustrating at times. So while you are watching Tom Brady and Co. take the opposition to task this winter, take a moment to reflect on those who made it possible!

Thanks to The Hall at Patriot Place sponsored by Raytheon for the information in this article.

New Genealogy Materials

In the last newsletter we promised to give the surnames of the families that contributed genealogical information to Rev. William L. Chaffin. The following is that list of names for which some information is available. All of these papers are hand written notes sent to Chaffin; some are more detailed than others, and some are simply a small scrap of paper with a few jottings. If you are interested in researching any of the information, please call or write the Society for assistance.

Adams, Aldrich, Alger, Allen, Ames, Andrews, Ashfield, Austin, Babbitt, Bailey, Barrows, Bartlett, Bean, Belcher, Bird, Bisbee, Bolles, Bolton, Bosworth, Brett, Briggs, Britton, Bruce, Bundy, Buck, Campbell, Carr, Churchill, Clark, Conant, Cooper, Copeland, Craft, Crossman, Curtis, Dailey, Dara, Day, Dean, Deans, Delano, Dickerman, Dollard, Doty, Drake, Dunbar, Ellis, Ferguson, Fobes, Foster, Franklin, French, Fuller, Gibbs, Gilbert, Gilmore, Godfrey, Gooch, Goodwin, Goward, Grossman, Guild, Gurney, Hack, Hall, Hanks, Harlow, Hartwell, Harvey, Hayden, Hewett, Hewitt, Hills, Hodges, Holbrook, Hollis, Howard, Hayward, Hunt, Johnson, Keene, Kelley, Keyser, Keyzar, Kimball, King, Kinsley, Knapp, Keith, Lake, Lincoln, Macomber, Manley, Marshall, Mason, Miller, Mitchell, Monk, Morse, Niles, Owen, Packard, Perry, Pettingill, Phillips, Pool, Poole, Pope, Porter, Pratt, Prentice, Phinney, Pierce, Quinlan, Randall, Reed, Ripley, Russell, Seele, Selee, Shaw, Sheldon, Shepard, Shields, Simmons, Simpson, Smith, Spaulding, Staples, Stearns, Stone, Strout, Sumner, Swan, Sylvester, Thayer, Thompson, Tilden, Tinkham, Torrey, Towne, Tupper, Turner, Vose, Wade, Waite, Washburn, Waters, Waters & Stearns, Ward, Watkins, Webster, Wheelock, White, Whitman, Whitman & Gurney, Wilbur, Wild, Wilde, Williams, Wilson, Willis, Witherell, Withington, Woodbury, Woodward.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Shoe lasts in various states of manufacture, variety of bobbins, a large collection of period newspapers with stories about the end of WWI, the 1938 Hurricane, Hurricane Gloria, the Apollo program, the Blizzard of 1978, a collection of news clippings relating to the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, WWI and the League of Nations, a book on stucco and concrete houses from the library of architect J. Clement Johnson, letter signed by Senator Weeks thanking Johnson for his help in the election, from Wayne Legge; Drum and Bugle Corp. Meet ticket, Frothingham park, 1931, from Richard Hill; canvas bag, Bank of Easton Earth Day, 1992, from Russ Meninno; Ames shovel stamped N.Y., N.H. & H R.R., from Lee Williams; old cobbler's tool, from Tom O'Brien; pair of running shoes from O.A. grad and track standout Jenna Davidner; Enterprise, October 27, 1921 with headline of fatal South Easton trolley crash, from Charlene Tingley; 1972 Tufts Dairy calendar, 1927/1983 Simpson Spring calendar, from Ella Porter; two frames, chair, aerial photos of Stonehill and Southeastern Regional, wedding announcement and holiday cards from the Cope-land family, from Nancy Hatchfield; Wedding photo of Alice (Kent) and Charles McCarthy, Jr., October 4, 1952, from Alice McCarthy; photo of O.A. Class of 1915 trip to Washington, D.C. and list of graduates, from Leo Harlow; coal hog, rug beater, Easton postcards, old bottles, music magazines and Ladies Home Journal, all early 1900's, photo of last crew at the Drake Foundry taken in 1890 (see back cover), from Eleanor Grant; postcard of Ames Long Pond, from Jack Luke; two batting championship trophies, Easton Little League and Easton Pony League, 1953 won by Gil Heino, from Gil Heino; VFW Diamond Jubilee book from Mrs. Edgar Loiselle; 1963 Eastoner from Sue Rivard; an 1851 text book about Indians owned by members of the Hayward family, from Debra Salisbury.

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

Spooky Rides are Coming!

Last years spooky hay ride was unfortunately a washout due to some very uncooperative weather. But fear not! We are at it again. This year, we are offering 2 hayrides with historian and storyteller Ed Hands on Saturday, October 23rd. The first ride will begin promptly at 5:00 p.m. and is kid friendly. The second ride beginning at approximately 6:00 p.m. will be aimed at a more mature audience. Parents with little ones are urged to use discretion when choosing which ride to go on. Children must accompany their parents. No child care is available during or between rides. Hot chocolate will be served for each ride.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE SPOOKY RIDES! Due to the popularity of this event, we do not anticipate having room for walk-ins. The cost of the ride will be \$5.00 per person paid in advance. Please reserve your spots by sending your check made payable to the Easton Historical Society, along with this form, to: Easton Historical Society, P.O. Box 3, North Easton, MA 02356. You will be notified when we receive your reservation and you will be checked in before getting on the ride. Please call 508-238-7774 for more information.

Your Name: _____

Names of other attendees: _____

Address: _____



New 2010 Holiday Ornament

The Society is happy to announce the eighth and latest addition to our popular series of holiday glass ornaments: the original 1895 Oliver Ames High School. Masterfully painted by well-known watercolorist Mary T. Bodio, the high school building was built from funds donated by former Governor Oliver Ames. He died before the building was dedicated so the building was named for him.

As in the past, the price of the ornament is still only \$10 each, or 4 for \$36. To reserve your advance order, send a note with your name, address, phone number, quantity and payment made out to Easton Historical Society, to: Hazel Varella, 121 Center Street, North Easton, MA 02356. All orders received will be acknowledged.

Have you started your collection yet? There is still time to get the other seven ornaments featuring the five H. H. Richardson buildings, the 1717 Josiah Keith house and the Rockery by F. L. Olmsted as painted by Mary T. Bodio. Special pricing is available for sets. In these tough economic times you can get a head start on your holiday shopping, and these ornaments make wonderful (and affordable) gifts. *The Society expresses its sincere thanks to Mary T. Bodio for graciously allowing us to use her artwork for this ornament.*

YARD SALE RESERVATION FORM

Saturday, September 18th, 9 A.M. to 3 P.M., at the Station,
80 Mechanic St., N. Easton

Rain date, Saturday, September 25th, 9 A.M. to 3 P.M.

To reserve your space in our fall yard sale, please fill out this form and send it, with a check for \$15 payable to the Easton Historical Society, to: Easton Historical Society, P.O. Box 3, North Easton, MA 02356.

Proceeds from the sale of spaces benefit the Society. Your sales are yours to keep! Spaces are limited, and will be the equivalent of two adjoining parking spaces. They will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. You must bring your own tables, chairs or tents. There is no trash collection at the Station, so please plan on removing your trash from the site at the end of the day. Bathroom facilities are available. All items must be yard sale items. Unfortunately, crafters can not be permitted at this time. The Easton Historical Society assumes no liability for loss or damages to any person or property before, during or after this event. Thank you for supporting the Easton Historical Society.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Pictured at right is a very rare sight—a wonderful group photo of some of the men who helped make Easton such an important iron making town. These men are the last crew to work at the historic Drake foundry which was located in front of Old Pond. The men are sitting in front of the blast furnace. At one time workers like these made the cannons and cannonballs so vital to the Revolutionary War effort, ordered by Gen. George Washington himself. This photo was taken in 1890, and was donated by Eleanor Grant, whose ancestor Gordon Grant is pictured among the crew.



Front row, left to right: George Hedridge, Bill Erving, Andrew Phillips, Lincoln Drake (the owner of the foundry), Baxter, Billy Golden.
 Back row, left to right: Gordon Grant, Royal Rollins, Dick Keisle (from England), Jim Morris, George King, Jimmy Marion, George Rollins, Ed Harvey.

Address changing? Please tell us!

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