



EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Fall 2019

Volume 20, Issue 1



Celebrating 50 Years!

Join us as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the gift of the Old Colony Railroad Station! In November of 1969 four members of the Ames family, David Ames, Sr., John S. Ames, 2nd, Senator Oliver F. Ames and William A. Parker presented our museum as a gift to the Society. We will celebrate this extraordinary donation with a special reception. Watch your mail for details!

When: Sunday, November 10, 2019

Time: 1-5 p.m.

Where: Easton Country Club

Who: Representatives from the Ames and Parker families, special speakers, and you!

CALENDAR

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

Sunday, September 8, Open House from 1-5 p.m. with Janice Narsasian who will talk about her career as a kindergarten teacher in the Easton school system.

Saturday, September 14, Fall Bottle and Can Drive, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. rain or shine!

Sunday, October 13, Open House from 1-5 p.m. featuring Frederick L. Ames speaking on the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike ceremony.

Sunday, November 3, Daylight Savings Time ends. Set your clocks back one hour!

Sunday, November 10, our 50th Anniversary Celebration at Easton Country Club, 1-5 p.m.

Monday, November 11, Veteran's Day. Thank a veteran for their service.

Thursday, November 28th, Happy Thanksgiving!

Looking ahead...

*It may seem early, but the annual Easton Lions Club Holiday Festival is on its way! Watch for it on December 7-8. Our December Open House will be held the following weekend. Get a jump on your holiday shopping with our new books *A Beautiful Image of Historic Easton* and *Reminiscences: Volume 10*.*

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

An anniversary is a time to celebrate the joys of today, the memories of yesterday, and the hopes of tomorrow.—Author unknown

When I first attended a meeting of the Easton Historical Society in late 1979, I found the people very nice, the meeting interesting, and the possibility of becoming a member crossed my mind. I followed through a few months later and have been a member ever since. Now, as we prepare to celebrate a very special anniversary, it seems good to me to reflect on the now, the then, and the future of the Society and Museum.

As I have said before, I have the best job around. I am surrounded by terrific people who have a real passion for history, and continue to encourage me in many ways. The building I work in is so much more than “just a building.” It is one of the finest examples of Richardson’s small country railroad stations in existence (with apologies to our friends in the other four Richardson buildings, many visitors have said that our Museum is their favorite Richardson work). The collections that we house are unique in that so much of Easton is reflected in the history of the United States. Each day seems to bring a new discovery, or begin a new relationship with a member, a student, or a volunteer.

Forty years ago, when I first came on board, the Museum had undergone an incredible change. Those first ten years of ownership were full of challenges! We had a building, but little money. Many people rose to that challenge, and with lots of time, elbow grease, and donations, broken windows were replaced, paint was removed from walls, the roof was repaired, and the heating system was brought up to speed. Somehow I managed to escape all that, but I owe a great debt of gratitude to those who worked so hard for something they all believed would be a real benefit to the citizens of Easton. The collections, and our knowledge, grew as gifts began to arrive. Special events like the Richardson Tour in the early 1970’s, the 100th anniversary of the building of the station in 1982, flea markets and antique car shows, all brought in an interested public and raised awareness of our unique history. Looking through the first newsletters gave a good indication of where we were going as a Society. A wonderfully generous gift from the Robert D. and Sally G. King Trust provided the means to move us forward in ways we could not have done on our own.

Now, after all those years, I am excited to look ahead. The Society remains strong, and membership continues to increase. The collections continue to grow, and are used by all kinds of researchers. The protection of both the Museum and our collections is moving forward into new areas, and you will be hearing more about that in a few months. Good things are happening and the future looks bright. Thanks to each one of you, we will continue the important work of gathering and preserving the history of Easton. And I look forward to being part of that for a long time to come!

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

Officers for 2018-2019

President Kenneth J. Michel
1st Vice President David Ames, Jr.
2nd Vice President Edmund C. Hands
Treasurer Nancy DeLuca
Recording / Corresponding Secretary Hazel L. Varella

Directors

Patricia Baker
Jonathan J. Coe
Joanne England
Judge Leon J. Lombardi
Debra Salisbury
Past President—Deborah MacPhee
Director Emeritus—Robert J. Wooster
Educational Liaison—Matthew Auger
Curator—Frank T. Meninno

WELCOME TO REMINISCENCES: VOLUME TEN

Welcome to the tenth edition of Reminiscences. Oakes Angier Ames, an influential but less well-known Ames family member, was the subject of a lecture given at our 2018 annual meeting by Emily Moschella. It is presented here in Volume Ten, along with a brief letter he wrote to Edward J. Morse. Among his many activities in Easton, Ames was the president of the Ames Shovel Works for many years, and he had “Queset House” built as his home in 1854. From that same time period, a diary entry by Shovel Works employee Daniel Lillie reports on a devastating fire at the factory.

Two of our annual historians have again researched very fascinating topics. Professor Chet Raymo describes the power of autumn, especially the roles played by acorns and the quiet sounds of the woods. Edmund Hands examines two events almost eighty years apart and their effects on Easton: the Mexican War and the Spanish Flu of 1918.

Two articles each revolve around one of the “Borderland” Ames couple: Oakes describes a Cuban botanical research facility he helped acquire for Harvard, and Blanche writes a letter to the voters of Easton endorsing a woman running for the School Committee.

In a speech given at “Sheep Pasture,” Hazel Varella looks at the life of its former resident, Elise Ames Parker, the extraordinary challenges she encountered, and her unwavering dedication and generosity to Easton. A letter she received from H. Judson Robinson about Easton in the early 1900s is very informative. Continuing from Volume Nine are Charlotte Wallin Nelson’s descriptions of growing up in North Easton in that same era.

Sports are the focus of several articles and short pieces. Our annual author Avery L. Williams, Jr., shows us the world of stock car racing in Furnace Village in the mid-20th century. Baseball is featured twice: first, in a brief 1903 letter Rev. William Chaffin wrote, giving us a slice of life about an upcoming local baseball game, and second, in an article about Red Sox star Ted Williams providing prizes for Easton children in the early 1960s.

From that same era, we review the high school’s popular “Gym Jam” athletic spectacles. The student bamboo dancers from that event competed in a nationally televised talent show in New York in 1962. One of them was Wayne Hill, and he shares his experiences traveling to the Big Apple to perform in tryouts and on TV. That same year, winning on Boston’s Community Auditions TV show were two young local musicians.

Our annual poet, Anne Wooster Drury, again reflects on many aspects of Easton’s uniqueness. The volume concludes with a list of all the Society’s officers and directors from over the years, an Easton word search puzzle, and a pictorial review of the year. Other photos illustrating the people and places of the past may be found throughout Volume Ten.

Three very special people died in 2018: Mrs. Elizabeth M. Ames, Mrs. Mary T. Bodio, and Dr. Robert Misiewicz. It is appropriate to begin Volume Ten by recognizing their incredible commitment to Easton and the Easton Historical Society and Museum.

Daniel P. Paré Hazel L. Varella

Donations

David Marcham donated a map of the Massachusetts trolley system and information on street railways; **Joseph Calarese** donated an old glass oil lamp; **Priscilla Almquist-Olsen** donated a copy of Oakes Ames: A Memorial Volume, inscribed to Harland Almquist by Blanche Ames, two metal lunchboxes, copies of some Oakes Ames Memorial Hall records, and special items of family clothing and keepsakes; **Alice McCarthy** donated several postcards found in the attic at 314 Center Street, a Provincetown souvenir book kept by Dorothy Bradford from the OAHS Class of 1927 trip, an airmail letter from Sweden to Edith Garcia, WWI letter from Camp Jackson, S.C. to Edith Reynolds in 1918, an early 20th century photo album of Rome from a visit by Father Bradley (brother of Mollie McNamara) and given to Mamie Kelleher, a relative of the McCarthy's; **James McGowan** donated ice cutting saws from Monte's Ice House, early 1900's, and 1 wood blade protector; **Carol Bosader** donated a photo of the OAHS 1904 boy's basketball team; **Daniel Farren** donated his OAHS jacket with baseball letter, and his #21 OA Basketball Shirt; **Ed Leonard** donated two perfect attendance pins from Unity Church and newspaper clippings about saving Unity Church, Boston Globe, April 20, 2006; **David Allen Lambert** donated photos of Easton found in Howard Hansen's shop in Stoughton; **Foxborough Historical Commission** donated a deed dated 1778 regarding land in Easton mentioning Jacob Macomber, Daniel Keith, Jr., and witnessed by Benjamin Pettingill and Nathan Seele; **Jonathan Jackson Coe** donated a curio cabinet; **Barry Knowlton** donated an American copy of a German Luger pistol; **Scott and Paula MonKarsh** donated Dorothy Hatchfield's 1930 NEG report card with a cardboard milk bottle attached that promotes healthy eating; **The History Room (Anne DiSanto)** donated an 1857 Bible from the Lincoln family with family records to the 1790's; **John Kenyon** donated papers from the Weidemann and Larson family: Disability Certificate from the Supreme Lodge of the Sons of Norway, WWII Ration Book, Easton Chapter Order of the Eastern Star program 1938; **Karen Brophy Olson** donated an OAHS sports letter; **Richard Lewis** donated a 1791 Town Warrant authorizing Joseph Hayward to collect taxes in his district, and his 1832 hand-written will.

Financial donations have been received from **Estate of Mrs. David Ames, William M. Ames, Mathew Auger, Sandeep Gupta, Larry and Nancy Hurley, the North Easton Savings Bank, and The Victorian Society.**

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

Fall Bottle and Can Drive

The Ken Martin memorial bottle and can drive will be held Saturday, September 14th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Museum. The drive will be held rain or shine. We will very gladly accept any Massachusetts returnable bottles and cans. Unfortunately, we cannot accept any recycling materials.

This continues to be an important fundraiser for us. All those nickels add up, and both the donated bottles and cans and donations received in memory of Ken help us to continue to do the work of preserving Easton's history!

If you are unable to bring your donation that day, please call us at 508-238-7774 or email us at eastonmahsmuseum@gmail.com to arrange pickup. Thank you!

In Memoriam

Evelyn I. Brown, 88, a longtime resident of Easton, passed away peacefully on Thursday, July 18, 2019. A native of Easton, she was the daughter of the late Harold P. and Mildred I. (Rollins) Brown, and was a 1949 graduate of Oliver Ames High School. After a 35 year career with GTE-Sylvania, she worked at for Dr. Sheldon Yunes and North Easton Dental Associates, retiring at the age of 80. Evelyn for many years was a member of the Evangelical Congregational Church of Easton where at one time she was secretary and also taught Sunday School. Evelyn was a frequent attendee at "Chowder and Chatter" and enjoyed traveling. She is survived by her loving son, Gary C. Brown of Easton; a sister, Marie DeFinis of Peabody and several nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews and one great great-niece. She was also the sister of the late Barbara Danforth. Her full obituary is here: <http://hosting-6751.tributes.com/obituary/show/Evelyn-I.-Brown-107321032>.

Rev. Dr. Alan W. Grant, 86, of Taunton, formerly of Easton, passed away peacefully on Thursday, August 1, 2019 at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston surrounded by his loving family. He was the devoted husband of Nancy R. (Campbell) Grant for 62 years. Born in Brockton, a son of the late Walter and Ruth (Hilmer) Swanson, he was raised and educated in Easton. He served in the Navy during Korea, and received an honorable discharge. He studied ministry at Upsala College, received his Master's Degree from Harvard University Divinity School, and his Doctorate from Andover Newton. He served as Pastor of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Easton and the House of Prayer Lutheran Church in Hingham where he is Pastor Emeritus. In addition to his wife Nancy, he is survived by his children, Kristina Ivanoski and her husband Paul of Easton, Kymberly Cronin and her husband Gary of Lakeville and Alan A. Grant and his wife Rhea of Plymouth; his siblings, Lorraine Carlson of Foxboro and Alan Swanson of Lakeville; 11 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Go to <http://hosting-6751.tributes.com/obituary/show/Alan-W.-Grant-107374842> for the full obituary.

Michael G. Soule of No. Easton, age 63 passed Thursday, July 4th, 2019. He was the husband of Joanne (Blaisdell) Soule, and son-in-law of Myrtle Blaisdell. Michael grew up in Bridgewater and was a Registered Nurse. He worked at Brockton Hospital, Lakeville Hospital, Mass Hospital School of Canton, and Pediatric Services of America in Brockton. He was the son of the late George and Mary (Worcester) Soule. Survivors include his daughters Jessica Soule of Washington, DC and Amanda Lee and her husband Daniel of Hawaii, grand-daughter Sophie Lee of Hawaii, and his siblings Mark Soule and his wife Marie of VA, Mitchell Soule and his wife Georgina of Rochester, Matthew Soule of So. Easton, James Soule and his wife Connie of Fall River, and Mary McGlone and her husband Timothy of Somerset. You can find the complete notice at <https://www.southeastfuneralhome.com/notices/Michael-Soule>.

Susan McEvoy-Strong passed peacefully on June 12, 2019, at age 60. As she lived every day, Susan squeezed every moment out of life that she could, outliving a terminal cancer diagnosis almost two years prior and continuing her adventures in the mountains of Colorado and Nepal until the very end. Born at Fort Rucker, Ala., September 3, 1958, Susan spent the majority of her childhood in North Easton, Mass. She moved to the Roaring Fork Valley in 1979 and held a deep fascination and intimate relationship with the mountain communities of Redstone and Marble. In 1993 she received her bachelor's degree in Psychology, Summa Cum Laude, from the University of Colorado Boulder. In 1996, Susan became a tour coordinator, caretaker, historian and docent at the Redstone Castle. Sue welcomed visitors and shared the past of Cleveholm Manor. Susan was a talented staff writer and editor for the Crystal Valley Echo and Marble Times and a certified Pilates and Yoga Instructor. She also volunteered for the DZI Foundation and later Global Dental. After she joined a Ladakh, India, trip in 2006, Susan became a dental assistant and began co-leading yearly trips of volunteer doctors to remote villages around Ladakh, and Pokhara, Nepal. Survivors include her husband, Dana Strong; beloved parents, Leo and Janice McEvoy; brother, John, and sister-in-law, Aedie McEvoy; nephews and niece, Alexander, James, and Leydn McEvoy; her sister and brother-in-law, Kathy and Cameron Law; and nephews, Micah and Eli Dawson. Please go to <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/southofboston-enterprise/obituary.aspx?n=susan-mcevoy-strong&pid=193279368> for Susan's full obituary.

Patrick Michel, 66, a resident of Brockton for the past 25 years, passed away peacefully with his family at his side on Friday, July 19, 2019 at Brockton Hospital after a period of failing health. He was the husband of the late Kathleen (Tinker) Farrell-Michel. Born in Boston, a son of the late Ralph K. and Mary T. (Rooney) Michel, he was raised in Easton and was a 1970 graduate of Oliver Ames High School. A licensed Massachusetts Contractor, he was employed in the building and restoration industry. He enjoyed woodworking, flying and was a self-taught musician who played the guitar and enjoyed music throughout his life. Patrick is survived by two sons, Matthew Farrell and his wife Tabitha Doniger of Brockton and Patrick Michel of Brockton; his siblings, Kenneth Michel and his wife Janet of Easton, John F. Michel of CA., Judy Ruxton of Taunton, Kevin Maloney of Easton and Dennis Maloney of Taunton; a grandchild, Makenna Farrell and several nieces and nephews. His obituary can be read at <http://hosting-6751.tributes.com/obituary/show/Ralph-Patrick-Michel-107329183>.

Genevieve C. (Sacco) Habelt, age 87 of South Easton, passed away on Friday, August 9th, 2019. Loving wife of John W. Habelt Jr. Genevieve was born in Boston, MA on October 7th, 1931 to the late Anthony and Genevieve (Minola) Sacco. She resided in W. Bridgewater and Easton for most of her life. Genevieve was very active in the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Easton for 25 years and loved singing and playing the bells in the Choir. She was the loving mother of George A. Allen and his wife Carol, of S. Easton, Thomas A. Allen and his wife Judy, of N. Easton, Stephen J. Habelt and his wife Sue, of Berkley, Scott W. Habelt and his wife Linda, of S. Easton, Teresa E. Richard and her husband Bob, of Wareham, Maria A. Allen and her partner Cindy Cleveland, of Lees Summit, MO, Kristina L. Sakowich, of Nicholasville, KY, Lisa M. Allen and her partner Kris Rottinghaus, of Kansas City, and the late Susan Berry of N. Easton. She also leaves behind many grandchildren, several great-grandchildren, and her two sons-in-law: Michael Berry of N. Easton and Michael Sakowich, of KY, and a daughter-in-law: Kathy Allen of Taunton. Genevieve was also the sister of the late Bertha Sacco, of N. Easton. Her full obituary is here: <https://www.southeastfuneralhome.com/notices/Genevieve-Habelt>.

Fall Events and Meetings

- ◆ Our September Open House will be held on September 8th from 1-5 p.m. Just in time to go back to school, recently retired Easton teacher Janice Narsasian will speak on the changes in responsibilities and teaching kindergarten during her 24 year career. Janice taught at both Moreau Hall and Center School. Early on she recognized the importance of developing a strong relationship between school and home, being an encourager to both the student and parents. Be sure to attend and hear how things have changed for these very youngest of students in Easton.
- ◆ Our Fall Bottle Drive is set for September 14th. You can find more information on page 4.
- ◆ One hundred fifty years ago the driving of a golden spike ceremonially completed the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad. A telegram was sent to the Ames Shovel Company in North Easton, notifying Oliver Ames, Jr. of the event. Join us at our Open House on October 13th from 1-5 p.m. as Frederick L. Ames talks about attending the recent 150th Anniversary of the Golden Spike ceremony.
- ◆ Our November 10th Open House will be the 50th Anniversary celebration of receiving the former Old Colony Railroad Station from the Ames and Parker Families. Plans are currently being finalized, and members will be notified with all the details for this occasion. So mark your calendars, and get ready to be part of an historic celebration!
- ◆ There are three events that our members may be interested in. "The Enigma of Oakes Ames" is a symposium organized by Frederick L. Ames and Maury Klein. It will be held at Stonehill College's Martin Institute on Saturday, September 21 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event, which coincides with the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad, features speakers Pulitzer Prize winner T. J. Stiles, our own Ed Hands, Maury Klein, Chris Milford and Jay Wickersham, discussing various aspects of the life of Oakes Ames. The cost is \$20 per person, \$10 for seniors. Registration and other information may be found at <https://www.stonehill.edu/offices-services/archives/oakes-ames-symposium/>.
- ◆ There are two events sponsored by the Old Colony Civil War Round Table. The first is their September Meeting to be held on September 19th, 7:30 p.m. at the Endicott Estate, Dedham, MA. The topic is titled "Voices From The Attic" and features author Carleton Young discussing his new book of the same title. Based on 200+ letters found in a family home, the letters were written by two brothers and detail numerous accounts of Civil War battles and army life. The second event is the Round Table's annual meeting and dinner on October 17, 6-10 p.m. at the Four Points Sheraton in Norwood, MA. The featured speaker is the Honorable Frank Williams, former Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. He will speak about "Ulysses S. Grant as a Hero." Tickets are \$45 and include a chicken dinner. For more information please see the website at www.occwrt.org.
- ◆ Looking ahead to the holiday season, we will once again be supporting the "Easton Festival of Trees." This event, which has grown in popularity each year, raises funds for a variety of charitable organizations. The very talented Nancy DeLuca will be hard at work on a special tree. Who will win it this year?
- ◆ Ending the list is the annual Easton Lions Club Holiday Festival on December 7-8th. The Easton Garden Club will be partnering with us to hold their annual Greens Sale, something we always look forward to. Join us and make the season merrier!



Nestled into the corner of Pond and Mechanic Streets, this shed was a paint shop, notably evidenced by the sign on the door.

Of more interest are the two items staring out. On the right is a bust of Congressman Oakes Ames, which may be the one that is in the collection at our Museum. The standing figure on the left is also Oakes Ames, whose name appears on the pedestal base. We have not seen this before. Does anyone know what became of this statue? We would love to know if it is still in existence somewhere!

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