

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TRAIN TRACKS



CALENDAR

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

*Saturday, November 30th,
Chanukah Begins!*

*Saturday, December 7th, 10
A.M. to 5 P.M., and Sunday,
December 8th, Noon to 5
P.M., Holiday Open House*

*Sunday, December 15th,
Open House at the Station,
1 P.M. to 5 P.M.*

*Wednesday, December 25th,
Merry Christmas!*

*Wednesday, January 1st,
Happy 2003!*

*Sunday, January 12th,
Open House at the Station,
1 P.M. to 5 P.M.*

*Sunday, February 9th,
Open House at the Station,
1 P.M. to 5 P.M.*

*Thursday, April 3rd, Chow-
der and Chatter*

*Saturday, May 3rd, Bottle
Drive*

*Easton Historical Society News-
letter is published quarterly by
the Easton Historical Society.*

Officers:

President—Dot Berry

1st Vice President—Ken Michel

*2nd Vice President, Curator—Paul
Berry*

Treasurer—Patricia Baker

Recording Secretary—Hazel Varella

Corresponding Secretary—Curtis

Chase

Director—Ed Hands

Director—Gary Uzdavinis

Director, Editor—Frank T. Meninno

Easton Holiday Festival!

The 2002 Easton Holiday Festival will be held on Saturday and Sunday, December 7th and 8th. A variety of events have been planned around the lighting of the historic F. L. Olmsted designed Rockery on Saturday evening.

The Society museum, the former Old Colony Railroad Station, will be open both days of the festival. It is just a short walk past the Children's Museum. Please come out of the cold and join us for a cup of hot coffee and treats, as well as a chance to see our display of Easton history. Curator Paul Berry is sure to have some interesting items out to celebrate the Holiday Season!

There will be a special raffle at the Station. The prize is a gift certificate to Benjamin's Restaurant in Taunton, MA. Two lucky winners will be chosen. We will also have a "White Elephant" table. If you have an item to donate, please call us. Be sure to stop by and perhaps take home a treasure yourself.

This is also an opportune time to pick up a gift or stocking stuffer from the Society. Perhaps someone new to town would enjoy a book on their neighborhood. We recommend a copy of Ed Hands wonderful "Easton's Neighborhoods". Someone who has moved away may enjoy a copy of "Memories of Twentieth Century Easton", a very nicely done photo book. A variety of other booklets and small gifts are available at affordable prices. We will also have a table set up at the Oakes Ames Memorial Hall on Saturday. Call 508-238-7774 for further information.

Honoring Easton's Veterans

Recently, the Pvt. George F. Schindler VFW Post #2547 began dedicating intersections in memory of those Eastoner's who gave the supreme sacrifice for our freedom. We list them here and the intersections dedicated in their memory to honor the families of these men, and to ensure that they are remembered.

Eastoner's who died in World War II:

Robert E. Chisholm, Washington Street and County Lane

Paul E. Farrell, Sheridan and Park Street

Robert E. Fernandez, Baldwin Street and Elise Circle

Robert E. Haglund, Williams and Reynolds Streets

Albert E. Ham, Washington Street and Eisenhower Drive

Frank E. Hewitt, Williams Street and Howland Court

Brian L. Nolan, Main and Seaver Streets

Oliver A. Parker, Main and Oliver Streets

Anthony J. Pontes, Pond Street and Sullivan Avenue

Evan T. Sharpe, Bay and Mountain Roads

Patrick F. Shea, Jr., Dean Street and Summerfield Lane

Stanley H. Smith, Foundry and South Streets

Anthony F. Souza, Jr., Central and Washington Streets

John Texeira, Baldwin and Bridge Streets.

Upcoming honorees are Robert F. Thompson, who died in the Korean War, and Kenneth W. Scully, Edward F. Smith and Robert J. Todd, who died in the Vietnam War. You have our gratitude for giving yourselves up to protect our freedoms.

The Station Master

President Dot Berry

Season's Greetings to all of our members and friends! We have been very busy at the Station preparing for the Holiday Festival, Open Houses, Dedications and tours.

As the year closes, I would like to thank all of the volunteers who assisted us with the projects we have taken on. There are too many helpers to list here. More sorting was done, a few more items were identified, and other items properly stored. We obtained a computer which will be used for research. In addition, we now have a microfiche reader and copies of the

United States Census records.

The Society's collection has increased due to the generosity of a number of people. Added items include books, furnishings and even an antique fire alarm system.

Please remember to stop by during the upcoming Holiday Festival. It will be nice and warm inside and we would love to spread a little holiday cheer.

I wish you all the best of health and prosperity for 2003.



Easton Citizens Honored

On Sunday, December 8th, the Easton Historical Commission will award the Chaffin and Briggs awards to people who have made significant contributions to preserving Easton's historical legacy. The deserving winners will be announced at Unity Church at 2:00 P.M. This will be followed by a ceremony initiating the awarding of the Boston Post Cane to Easton's oldest resident. The honoree will receive a Post Cane pin and a certificate. At the conclusion of the ceremony, you may view the entries in the photography contest. Please continue your historical afternoon by joining us at the Station afterwards. It is just a short walk from the church.

Oliver F. Ames Biography

A brief biography of former State Senator Oliver F. Ames, the "Designated Family Patriarch", and one of four men who gave the Station to the Society in 1969, has been printed in the Easton Community Calendar. Many facets of his life are mentioned, particularly his naval experiences during World War II.

If you live in town, you can obtain a copy of the Easton Community Calendar in the Recreation Department at the Town Offices on Elm Street, North Easton. If you want one, and are out of town, please send a letter to Hazel L. Varella, 121 Center Street, North Easton MA 02356 and she will gladly mail you a copy.

Recent Events

Approximately one-hundred people turned out for the bench dedication that was held on Sunday, September 8th, at the Station. President Dorothy Berry and Hazel Varella remarked about Ken Jackson and Robert and Sally King. Ken and Robert have passed on, and Sally was unable to attend. A great many memories were shared by family members. It was very heartwarming to see such a large turnout as these benches were dedicated in their memory and honor.

The tour of the historic Queset house held on Sunday, September 29th, was well attended. It was a beautiful day to stroll the grounds and a few people came through the house twice to see what they missed the first time through. Mr. Oliver Ames graced us with his company, as well as did Mrs. David Ames, who was accompanied by her grand-daughter.

The recent bottle drive netted \$135 thanks to the hard work, time and effort of Ken Martin, assisted by Ed Hands. That is a lot of bottles and cans (figure it out)! Thank you all for your generous donations. Start saving for our May 3rd drive!

On October 23rd, Dorothy Berry, Mary LeRoy, Elmer Harlow and Edwin C. White shared their many memories of working in Easton during the 1950's and 1960's. The forum was held in the F. L. Olmsted School Teacher's Room, and was moderated by Ed Hands. A very informative discussion was videotaped by Mary Ryan, and hopefully it will be played on the local cable channel in the near future. Thanks to all who participated.

What Ever Should I Get for Christmas ?

Advertising must have evolved with gift giving. With the economy booming in the late 1800's, workers were able to afford small niceties and sundries for their loved ones. Gift giving was no longer confined to the affluent citizens in town. Christmas celebrations grew increasingly family oriented, a definite shift away from the solemn church gatherings of old. Merchants began to advertise their wares as gifts for Christmas. Most of this advertising was accomplished with simple placards in store windows. This worked well with the people living in the village centers. However, a number of people lived in rural areas. There had to be a way to reach these potential customers. The answer came in the form of newspaper advertisements.

Reverend George G. Withington was probably the first Eastoner to use a newspaper to sell his goods as holiday gifts. Withington was born in Bolton, Mass. in 1831. His lawyer father was able to provide George with a well rounded education (and a fair amount of business savvy). He attended a theological school as a young man. Upon his graduation the old First Congregational Parish of Easton called him to minister in 1858. Withington accepted the call. He married one of the Honorable Elijah Howard's daughters shortly after settling here. The Reverend Withington took to teaching in school also, and for a while was the headmaster at the high school. After retiring from the ministry in 1870, he became a druggist. The ex-reverend kept a store on the west side of Center Street just south of the square.

The old Easton Journal began carrying ads for Christmas gifts around this time. The ads were primarily placed by large commercial establishments in Brockton. H.W. Robinson, C.F. Copeland and Mace Gay, among others, often took out large advertisements. Many North Eastoners worked in Brockton and began to spend their money there. Perhaps it was this decline in local spending that prompted Withington to compete with the Brockton stores for those precious Easton dollars.

His earliest surviving ad ran in the Journal on Friday, December 4th, 1885. The ad itself is nondescript, using primitive graphics to keep it from being lost in the surrounding columns. Beginning with "Will be opened in a few days, HOLIDAY PRESENTS. Prettier and cheaper than ever before", the simple ad lists a variety of items available in Withington's Center Street store. The items advertised were clearly aimed towards adults. Toiletries, jewelry and work boxes were available in leather and plush velvets, along with pocket books, bill folds, wallets and purses. Stationary items were offered for sale too, along with laptops (or lap desks), inkstands and folders. Gifts for men included pocket knives, razors, shaving mugs, pipes, cigars and matchboxes. The store stocked a selection of Christmas and New Years cards in various styles and prices. Fancy cards could cost up to \$1.50 each, quite expensive for those days! There is no mention of gifts for young ones.

The small ads must have had a positive affect on the business. The next year Withington again ran holiday ads in the Journal. This time the ads were larger, less wordy and much bolder. It was a real attention getter. While not as large and grand as some contemporary ads, it was clearly an improvement and a sign that Christmas advertising was here to stay. It also gives a clue as to how he handled the post-Christmas inventory in his store. Withington did not offer the clearance sale we often expect. Instead he advocated giving New Year's presents. I wonder how that notion failed to catch on!

The fight for Easton's spending money continues today. The town enjoys a wide variety of specialty shops, yet one must still leave town to find department store items. A few years ago a proposed mall was defeated at town meeting when a zoning change was denied by voters. This one action was a resounding victory for the small shop owners whose stores we frequent today. Those same merchants in turn give back to the town and it's people. They can thank Reverend Withington for starting the original "Buy Easton" campaign so many years ago. Happy holidays, one and all!

The Easton Historical Society invites you to become a member of our organization. Please use this form for a new membership. Include your check or money order payable to the **Easton Historical Society** and send it along to : Easton Historical Society, P.O. Box 3, North Easton, MA 02356.

New Member(s):

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

If this is a gift, please include your name: _____

Membership Individual \$10.00

Family \$15.00

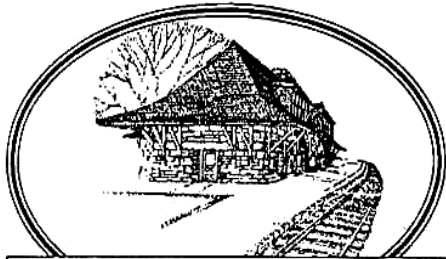
Corporate \$100

Senior (65 and up) \$7.00

Other Donations \$ _____

Total \$ _____

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Old Colony Railroad Station

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

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