

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# TRAIN TRACKS



## CALENDAR

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

*Thursday, November 27th, Thanksgiving Day*

*Holiday Festival Open House*

*Saturday, December 6th, Station Open 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.*

*Sunday, December 7th, Station Open 1-5 P.M.*

*Sunday, December 14th, Station Open, 1-5 P.M.*

*Sunday, January 11th, Station Open, 1-5 P.M.*

*Sunday, February 8th, Station Open, 1-5 P.M.*

*Wednesday, April 1st, Chowder and Chatter dinner*

*Sunday, April 18th, Meet the Professor at the Station.*

*Saturday, May 1st, Bottle Drive at the Station, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.*

*Easton Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly by the Easton Historical Society.*

*Officers:*

*President—Frank T. Meninno*

*1st Vice President—Ken Michel*

*2nd Vice President, Curator—Paul Berry*

*Treasurer—Patricia Baker*

*Recording Secretary—Hazel Varella*

*Corresponding Secretary—Curtis Chase*

*Director—Dot Berry*

*Director—Ed Hands*

*Director—Gary Uzdavinis*

*Director, Editor—Frank T. Meninno*

## 'Tis the Season!

Holiday greetings to all of our members and friends! Easton is preparing for its annual holiday festival, held this year on Saturday, December 6th, and Sunday, December 7th. The Station will be open from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, and open Sunday from Noon to 5:00 P.M.

This year we are pleased to announce the availability of a new Christmas ornament! This white, ball shaped ornament is the first of a series of ornaments depicting scenes in Easton, and is also a limited edition. It's design features the Old Colony Railroad Station in North Easton, our headquarters, beautifully created by renowned artist Mary Bodio. We are very grateful to Mary for allowing us to use her original artwork. Future ornaments will feature more of her artwork, so be sure to get your 2003 ornament before they are gone!

We are extending our members a chance to reserve your ornaments by pre-ordering them. The ornaments are priced at \$10.00 each, or a lot of four for \$36.00. For example, if you order six ornaments, the price will be \$56.00 ( \$36.00 for four, and \$20.00 for the extra two). When pre-ordering, please use the form on the back of this newsletter. Your pre-orders will be available at the Station during the Holiday Festival, and also at the December 14th open house. We suggest that you get your orders in early! We reserve the right to limit quantities if necessary, and you will be notified when additional ornaments have arrived.

Also, we are pleased to announce that the pewter Ames shovel ornaments are back! It took a little detective work to find the manufacturer, but we tracked him down. These shovels are gift boxed and ready to go.

We always have a wide selection of gifts to send to your favorite history lover. Much of our history spans many areas of interest. As a result, many of the written materials we offer will make great reading to other history buffs. We hope you will consider these when doing your holiday shopping!

As always, please feel free to join us for some hot beverages and snacks at the Station. We are just off the center of town, below the Children's Museum. We hope to see you!

## The Station Master

President Frank T. Meninno

Hello all, and best wishes for this holiday season. It is hard to believe that it is almost upon us! I've already seen plenty of Christmas items on display in the stores around here. Of course, the blitz will get worse as the holidays approach. The next thing you know, we'll be looking at that awful white stuff—snow!

Last month, the Historical Society hosted a select group of visitors. That group was a troop of Brownies from Easton. They were doing a walking tour of North Easton to earn a pin in history. Their leader asked if we would be open, and as it coincided with a scheduled open house, we said fine. I must admit that we held our breaths when the 19 or so third graders came in. Actually, I met them outside the Station, where the parents and leaders were going over some rules .

Well, let me tell you, they were very well behaved! These inquisitive young girls really acted more like young ladies. They asked very good questions, and very much enjoyed Curator Paul Berry ringing the restored fire alarm system for them. These children will have history in school this year, and more local history in fifth grade. I found it very encouraging to see their interest and to hear their remarks. This is one reason that we do what we do—preserve Easton's history for our current and future generations!

On October 22nd, we were treated to a real treat. The four class presidents from the classes of 1946-1949 graced us with their memories and insights into growing up in Easton during the Depression years, Pearl Harbor and the war years, and look-

ing at the great athletic teams of the times. They were led in the discussion by our own Ed Hands, who as usual did an excellent job moderating. Afterwards, we enjoyed cider and donut holes provided by Mr. and Mrs. David Varella. The meeting was well attended, and it was just a great night all around. Mr. Porter, Mr. Wooster, Mr. Peterson and Mr. Silva, thank you all again for sharing your life experiences with us.

Ken Martin presented the Society with a check from the bottle drive held a few weeks prior. Ken puts a lot of effort into this. He has been faithful in raising funds for us this way for a long time. The next drive is scheduled for May 1st, so save all this bottles and cans from those holiday parties. Ken will be looking for them!

## The Curator's Corner

Curator Paul Berry

Hi everyone! It has been busy at the Station. We hosted the class of 1948 recently, as well as giving a tour to a troop of brownies during our September open house. It was a pleasure to have these groups come in.

As you have seen, we heard some great stories from the class presidents that spoke at our recent meeting. They spoke about being air wardens during World War II, growing their own food, rationing, and told some funny stories. At times, they became emotional remembering people

and places that meant so much to them. One thing that stood out was that they all mentioned how good it was to be with family during these hard times.

As a curator, I know that photos, artifacts, paintings and clippings are an important part of our history. But the intangibles, those things that are seldom mentioned, are just as important but are rare. As this holiday season approaches, it would be great to hear how your family celebrated holidays. What do you remember about spending an old

Fashioned holiday at your grandparents? What events did you take part in in Easton? Who played key roles in organizing parties around town? And while we are on the subject, how did you celebrate the 4th of July, VJ Day, Thanksgiving or any of the other days of celebration? How about early Chanukah celebrations?

If you are willing to share with us these stories, please drop by during our open houses, or drop us a note about them. We may eventually put them into book form as a lasting history of joyous times!

The Christmas season is upon us once again. Shoppers are busy with the annual struggle of what gift to get a loved one and where to get it ! Merchants have stepped up the media blitz to advertise all kinds of treats and sweets. Christmas cereals are popping up on the shelves of local markets. Church bazaars and craft shows are in full swing, and the hustle and bustle of keeping up will surely make us weary. What would Christmas be like in a simpler time, a time where supply exceeded demand, a time where toys took a back seat and the family gathering was the most cherished part of the holidays ?

The Christmas of 1883 was widely celebrated in Easton. Several gatherings were held, and Easton churches played a major role in celebrations. The Methodists celebrated the holiday with a cantata and a tree loaded with gifts for their Sunday school children. The festival took place on Christmas night in the Ames Memorial Hall. The stage was trimmed with pine boughs and evergreens. The cantata "Under The Palms" was performed under the direction of Mr. J. E. Shepardson. At 7:15 the curtain rose and some fifty children broke into radiant smiles. The singing lasted an hour. After the cantata ended, the children attacked the tree and became the proud owners of gifts and sweets that they thoroughly enjoyed. By ten o'clock, the festival had ended and the children returned to their homes.

The Unitarian Society held their festival on Christmas Eve in the Memorial Hall. The spacious auditorium was well filled." Mother Goose" was performed as a musical for the children, with Miss Hunt, the soprano of the choir, singing the lead and the Sunday school children playing various characters. Once this had ended, a tree filled with goods was presented to the children, who joyously reaped their harvest. Once the tree had been cleared away, the night belonged to those who enjoyed dancing, with music provided by Porter's Brockton orchestra. A good time was enjoyed by all.

At Dear Old Harmony Hall in Furnace Village, another group of happy holiday revelers gathered to celebrate Christmas. The hall was neatly trimmed with greenery. The happy and expectant faces of the little ones formed a pleasing picture to behold. The children sang carols and hymns for the audience, and a merry time was had by all who attended. Remembrances were exchanged, and the entertainment provided by the children was enjoyed by everyone.

Besides church and social events, you can be sure that many of the homes in town were filled with family and friends. For instance, a private gathering was held at the residence of Mr. Jason Willis. He was joined by several persons from out of town. Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Waite, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Sexton and family of Springfield, Mr. and Mrs. Buckland of Marlboro, and Miss Margaret Staples. As evening fell, a tree was presented on which was a gift for each person who attended. A fine night of friendship and merriment followed. Several other private gatherings were held around town, and even the almshouse had a tree for Christmas.

While these celebrations were taking place, Easton was being hit by a snow storm. Twenty-two inches of snow had already fallen by Christmas, and the thermometer readings were around 18 degrees below zero. James Rankin recorded a low of 22 degrees below zero on the Sunday before Christmas. Sleigh rides were a popular event, and John H. Daley was well known for his. Many a happy person spent a few minutes in his sled, enjoying the bumps and turns and the laughter that accompanied those rides.

Presents ranged from bicycles and pianos to personal items from local merchants. George G. Withington advertised shaving mugs and brushes, wallets, pocket books and toiletries, match boxes and writing instruments for gift giving. He also supplied a line of Christmas cards priced from one cent to a dollar and a half. Pretty fringed cards were also available, as well as New Year's and birthday cards.

The holidays of days past were filled with family and friends, celebrating the spirit of the season. Maybe our ancestors had it right!

The Easton Historical Society invites you to pre-order your 2003 limited edition Christmas ornament featuring Mary Bodio's artwork of the Old Colony Railroad Station. Ornaments are \$10.00 each, or lots of 4 for \$36.00. Please make your check payable to the "**Easton Historical Society**". Mail them to Mrs. Hazel Varella, 121 Center Street, North Easton, MA 02356, no later than November 24th. Your pre-ordered ornaments may be picked up at the Station during the Holiday Festival on December 6th and 7th, and at the open house on December 14th.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

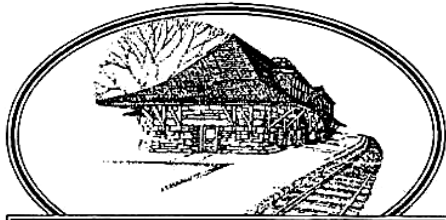
Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Lots of four ornaments \_\_\_\_\_ X \$36.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Single Ornaments \_\_\_\_\_ X \$10.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

ORDER TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



**Old Colony Railroad Station**

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

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