

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# TRAIN TRACKS



## Winter News You Can Use!

Hello winter! We have seen plenty of rain so far, but fortunately not too much cold weather. Hopefully the cold and snow will hold off until after the Easton Lions Club Holiday Festival. Your Society will take part in the weekend festivities. On Saturday, December 3rd, the Station will be open from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. On Sunday, December 4th, we will be open from noon until 5 P.M. Our December open house will be held on Sunday the 11th from 1 P.M. to 5 P.M. Come in and join us for a warm drink and friendly conversation! Check out our displays and see what is new. On Saturday the 3rd, we will have a table at Oakes Ames Hall. You can purchase raffle tickets for an original 1895 map of North Easton, and a variety of other Easton historical items. The map will be on display at the Hall on Saturday, and at the Station on Sunday. Our newest ornament, featuring Mary Bodio's artwork, will be available at both places as well.

Are you looking for a unique gift idea? We have some historic Easton calendars that were printed back in 1978. What makes them such a good idea? The days and dates match up for use in 2006! The calendar features old photos from Easton, many of which have not been reproduced since. You will also find a wonderful amount of historical Easton trivia and anecdotes. At \$5 a calendar, this is too good to pass up!

This is a great opportunity to see what makes Easton such a great place! Please make us a part of your weekend. Many thanks to the Easton Lions Club for their dedication and hard work that makes this weekend such a wonderful time. Happy holidays to all our members, family and friends!

### Announcement!

Due to the usual bad weather, freezing temperatures and low attendance, (not to mention snow and treacherous driving conditions) the Directors have decided not to have an open house during January and February. The Station may be open by appointment during that time. Be sure to call us at 508-238-7774 if you would like to arrange a special visit for a group. Please plan on joining us on March 12th when we return to our normally scheduled open houses. Have a safe winter!

### CALENDAR

*Saturday, December 3rd and Sunday, December 4th, Easton Lions Club annual Holiday Festival. Station open on Dec. 3rd from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. and Dec. 4th from Noon to 5 P.M. Raffle tickets and ornaments are available!*

*Sunday, December 4th, Mary Bodio will sign your ornaments, 2 P.M. at the Station!*

*Sunday, December 11th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M. Last chance for gifts and stocking stuffers. Raffle winner to be drawn today!*

*Wednesday, December 21st, Happy 280th Birthday to Easton!*

*Looking ahead....*

*Sunday, March 12th, open house at the Station, 1-5 P.M.*

*Thursday, April 16th, Chowder and Chatter!*

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

*Officers:*

*President, Editor—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—Deborah MacPhee*

## The Station Master

President Frank T. Meninno

Greetings! Or perhaps I should say season's greetings! It seems that just yesterday, my wife and I spent a wonderful warm day at the NRT's fall Harvest Fair at Sheep Pasture. It was good to see those of you who stopped by. A number of people new to Easton also gave us a look. It was encouraging to see their interest in local history!

As I was saying, season's greetings are in order as we approach the holidays. I invite you to join us during our open houses this December. I look forward to having the opportunity to greet you! Of course, I hope you will take advantage of some of our offerings. The glass ornaments featuring Mary Bodio's renderings of historic Easton buildings are very popular, and this limited edition should prove to be quite collectable as well. Need a gift to send to someone? We have some great books and small gift items

available for sale. They pack easy and travel well, and would make a fine gift for that person who has been away for a while, or for a visitor who would like to take a part of Easton with them!

Raffle tickets are still available for the 1895 map of North Easton. I was given one as a gift over twenty years ago, and it has graced the wall of my den ever since! Some lucky person will have this to look at in time for the holidays. Could it be you?

Many thanks to Ken Martin for running the bottle drive. We received a check for \$160 from Ken. Thanks to all of you who took the time to drop by and donate.

Plans are already being made for spring. Our annual Chowder and Chatter Dinner is scheduled for April 6th. Lee and Kevin Williams have again agreed to sponsor this. We are very thankful for their

continued commitment and support! Also in the spring, we will host a yard sale. This is something that we haven't done for a number of years. We are considering plans to incorporate our once popular geranium sale into this event, as well as involving some local groups.

Our annual meeting has not yet been set. However, it looks as though some of you Civil War buffs and coin collectors might be interested as we try to schedule a speaker to talk about Civil War tokens. Details are being worked out to present a talk about the 1918 Red Sox, as told through the colorful reporting of the times. More information will be provided in the next edition of this newsletter.

I am looking towards an exciting 2006, and I hope you will make some time to join us as we continue to preserve Easton's history. Happy holidays!

## The Curator's Corner

Curator Paul Berry

The Easton Historical Commission needs your help! We are looking for photos that show a good view of the former Paul Mitrano garage that occupied Main Street until last month. The developer has agreed to put up a marker telling about the history of the building, but we have not been able to find a good picture. Perhaps you might have an old Mitrano Chevrolet calendar or ad that showed the building. Maybe a photo of a passing parade would have the building in the background. Please contact us or Melanie DeWare of the Historical Commission if you can help. We recently had some windows broken at the Station. Three were broken one night, and a fourth two days later. The windows have been repaired. Hopefully this was an isolated incident, and we will return to peaceful times once again.

## Raffle Tickets Still Available

**Time is running out, but raffle tickets for an original, framed 1895 map of North Easton are still available for purchase! This map is in beautiful condition, and has been professionally framed and matted by the J. Inman Gallery. The entire framed map measures approximately 39” wide by 29” high. The mat is neutral in color, and the frame is made of a walnut colored wood with an exquisite rope detail around the inside edge. The map itself was part of the 1895 Bristol County Atlas. Among the features included on this rare map are the locations and shapes of houses and outbuildings, the lot owners names, street names and colored areas depicting ponds, school houses and cemeteries. Perhaps your own house or business is included on this map! On the back of the map is the original list of some of the merchants in the village. Since this map was produced for county and state records, a limited amount were printed. These maps, when one may be found, retail for between \$75—\$100 depending on condition. The framing and matting on this particular map greatly adds to its value. This map would make a handsome addition to anyone’s home, office or a great gift! The map will be displayed at each open house. The Society deeply appreciates the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin C. White who donated this wonderful item, and extends our sincere thanks to them.**

**Tickets will be available during the Holiday Festival at the Station, as well as at Oakes Ames Hall on Saturday, December 3rd. The map will also be on display at the Hall on Saturday, and at the Station on Sunday. Only 300 tickets are available for this raffle, priced at \$20 each. The winner will be drawn at 4 P.M. on December 11th during our open house at the Station. The President has offered to deliver the map to the winner if they are unable to pick it up. Delivery will be available to anyone within a two or three hour drive from Easton. All proceeds will be used to defray the cost of installing the new heating system. Thanks to all of you who have already purchased tickets!**

## A Little Snow History

A year ago, we published a story about snow removal. Two of our members were moved to write to us and share their memories. They have cheerfully agreed to allow us to share them with you!

Ms. Judy King of Farmington, Connecticut, grew up in North Easton. She wrote that she remembers when a man plowed the sidewalks with horses! Now this was not that many years ago. The man’s name was Tom Williams. Tom was well known in town and had a farm on the corner of Poquanticut Avenue and Chestnut Street . There he kept several very large work horses. He was hired by the town to do work from time to time, and one of these jobs was to plow the sidewalks in North Easton. He drove his horse along the sidewalk, pulling the plow behind. Eventually the town purchased a motorized sidewalk plow, and his services were no longer needed. Tom continued to use the horses to plow fields and provided many hay rides around the town. He continued this until his mysterious death in the late 1970’s.

Mrs. Shirley Redden of Easton wrote to share her mother’s memories. Very early on snow was packed down on the roads by a weighted sled, allowing sleds and sleighs to traverse the town. There being no motorized heavy equipment then, this was the preferred way to deal with heavy snows. Sometime around the early 1900’s, a team of horses would come through South Easton pulling a sled to pack the roads. Corners in particular were difficult to pack, and often used more weight than the straight sections of road. Often, the necessary weight would come from the local men who rode the sled. One fellow must have been a bit more rugged than the others, for when the sled came to a corner, the other men would all begin to yell “here comes a corner, bear down Birnie!” The call became quite well known in the area. Although she never knew the full name of the man, he became well remembered as “bear down Birnie.” The Society has on display a sign from a South Easton builder who went by the name of Dave Birnie. Perhaps they were the same person. Do you know?

We encourage our readers and members to write to us and share their recollections of life in Easton past. Thanks to Ms. Judy King and Mrs. Shirley Redden for adding their knowledge to our history!

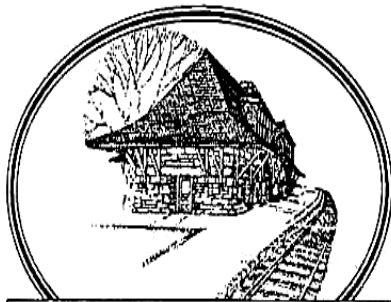
## 2005 Glass Ornaments

The 2005 Mary Bodio designed glass ornaments have arrived! This is the third ornament in the series of Richardson buildings in Easton, and features Mary's artwork of the Gate Lodge on Elm Street, North Easton. The Gate Lodge was designed by Richardson as the entrance to the magnificent Langwater estate, the home of Frederick Lothrop Ames. The Gate Lodge provided a caretaker with living quarters as well as garden storage for the estate.

Mary Bodio is a well known artist, and has done numerous artworks featuring the Easton schools, and other well known buildings. Once again, the Society gratefully appreciates Mary Bodio for allowing us to use her original artwork, and for her continued support of the Society!

Ornaments are \$10 each, or a set of 4 for \$36. They should be ready for pickup at the Station during the Holiday Festival on Saturday, December 3rd and Sunday, December 4th. Mary Bodio will be on hand that Sunday at 2 P.M. to personally sign your ornaments. Ornaments will also be available during our open house on Sunday, December 11th. If you still haven't begun your collection of these outstanding artworks, it is not too late to begin this year! We have a supply of the first two ornaments in the series that feature the Railroad Station and Ames Free Library. Wouldn't it be great to start your collection of signed ornaments this year?

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