

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1948-2008
CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF HISTORY

TRAIN TRACKS



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.

Good Tidings to You!

The Easton Historical Society welcomes you to our Holiday Weekend Open Houses! Your Society will be open during the Easton Lion's Club Annual Lighting of the Rockery Festival, held this year on the weekend of December 6th and 7th. The hours are printed under the calendar on the right.

We have the newest of our series of Holiday Ornaments available featuring Mary Bodio's artwork of the archway of the Rockery. This is our most colorful ornament yet. Mary will be at the Society on Sunday, December 7th at 2 P.M. to sign your purchases. Be sure to drop in and meet Mary. The Society is very grateful for Mary's support and for lending us her incredible artwork for these ornaments. Mary, thank you so very much! If you would like to begin collecting your set, which now numbers 6 ornaments, stop by or call us at 508-238-7774. Your ornaments may be held for Mary to sign if you wish.

As part of the festivities, we will offer a variety of new sale items, and the newly re-printed pictorial book Looking Back at Easton, Massachusetts. See inside for details about our newest offerings, sure to please the historian in your family.

Be sure to get your holiday greens from the Easton Garden Club, who will hold their annual sale at the Station on Saturday, December 6th. They always have wonderful items to decorate your home, and we thank them for decorating our Station!

Emmy's Hair Salon, 860 Washington Street, S. Easton, has donated a basket of beauty supplies that will be given away as a door prize on December 14th. Be sure to fill out a slip when you visit any of the December open houses. We thank Emmy's for their generosity and support!

Volume 9, Issue 2

December 2008

CALENDAR

Saturday, December 6th, the Station will be open from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Bake sale, raffle, food drive. New Mary Bodio glass ornaments, Blanche Ames prints, trivets available for purchase. We will also have a table at Oakes Ames Memorial Hall on Saturday.

Saturday, December 6th, Easton Garden Club Greens Sale at the Station, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Sunday, December 7th, the Station will be open from 1-5 P.M. Raffle, food drive. Mary Bodio will be here at 2 P.M. to sign your ornaments.

Sunday, December 14th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M. Last chance for your historic holiday shopping! Prize drawings for raffle, door prize, Where's the Shovel contest.

Sunday, December 21st, Hanukkah Begins. First day of Winter. Happy Birthday to Easton, 283 years old!

Thursday, December 25th, Christmas Day!

Thursday, January 1st, 2009. Happy New Year!

Sunday, January 11th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M.

Sunday, February 8th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M.

Winter open houses are held weather permitting. In case of slippery roads or extreme cold, we may not open. If you are not sure, please call before visiting!

SAVE THE DATE!

Chowder and Chatter, sponsored by Lee and Kevin Williams, March 26th, 2009.

*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—Patricia A. Baker, Recording / Corresponding Secretary—Hazel L. Varella
Directors—Daniel B. Amorim, Karen R. Cacciapuoti, Nancy DeLuca, Andrew R. Salisbury, Robert J. Wooster
Curator—Frank T. Meninno*

The Station Master

President Deborah MacPhee

“What a wonderful night!” I’ve heard this sentiment quite often since the Easton Historical Society 60th Anniversary Gala Celebration presented on September 20th at Stonehill College’s beautiful Alumni Hall by the Board of Directors of the Society. More than 100 people came together to celebrate the history of our Society and town.

The evening started with a beautiful cocktail reception featuring the music of the Brian Bigelow Band and great wines. Attendees enjoyed a video montage showing glimpses of Easton over the years created by Society Director Ed Hands. Society Curator Frank Meninno and his wife Anne-Marie created a series of displays of town history, including artifacts from our collections. A raffle featured original water colors by local artist Mario Bodio.

Avery Williams served as Master of Ceremonies, and did a great job introducing each speaker and keeping the program moving. For the first time ever, the Society presented two awards. The first, a Leadership Award, was presented to Mrs. Hazel Varella. The second, a Benefactor Award, was presented to Mrs. David Ames. Both award recipients entertained attendees with their recollections of the history of town.

Hazel Varella has served the Society for more than four decades, including serving as President on three separate occasions. Hazel taught history at Oliver Ames High School for more than 35 years, serving as Department Chair and developing and teaching the History of Easton elective course. The Society is honored to bestow this honor on Hazel in recognition of her work throughout the years to inspire others to understand and enjoy our town’s history, and her tireless dedication to the advancement of the Society and our mission. In recognition of this achievement, the Society is planning to plant and dedicate a tree to Hazel this coming Spring. We will be sure to let you know more about that in a future newsletter.

The second award was a Benefactor’s Award presented to Mrs. David Ames. Mrs. Ames has been an ardent supporter of the Society for many years. The Former Old Colony Railway Station, which serves as the Society’s home and houses our collections, was donated by the Ames family in 1969. Mrs. Ames’ dedication to the Society continues to this day. In fact, this past year our sign needed to be replaced. It was clear a new sign would be needed. Our new sign was only possible because of a generous donation by Mrs. Ames. The Society is proud to honor the stewardship of Mrs. David Ames.

Each attendee received a special publication from the Easton Historical Society titled “A Glimpse of the Past.” Information in the publication was authored by Hazel Varella. Judy Luke transcribed the booklet in preparation for printing, and printing was provided courtesy of Jack and Judy Luke. Thanks!

Finally, special thanks go to the Gala Committee: Sherry Little, Cheryl Morrison, Faith Rich, Co-Chairs Nancy DeLuca and Karen Cacciapuoti. The Gala Committee worked tirelessly to ensure an exciting and elegant event, and by any measure their efforts were an unbridled success.

Curator’s Corner

Curator / Caretaker Frank T. Meninno

I recently had the opportunity to host a tour of North Easton for a group of architects from the Boston area. Architect Chris Milford, joined by Fred Ames, led the group to several of our famous Richardson buildings. He offered insights into Richardson and his works here in town. I am always able to learn something new. For instance, I would not have been aware of Richardson’s use of a technique called “re-centering” that draws your eye to different parts of the Oakes Ames Memorial Hall, while keeping an appearance of perfect balance in the building.

The two days prior to the architects tour found the Station filled with eager third graders from the Richardson school. A total of six classes visited over the two days. I prepared a look at schools in old Easton. Of particular interest to the kids were photos of the old one-room schoolhouses in their neighborhoods. Their favorite photo, however, was a picture of one of Easton’s first school busses—a horse drawn wagon! It was called the May Queen and was driven by Philander Fecto. Hopefully the kids returned to their classes with a deeper appreciation of what they have today!

In Memoriam

The Society lost a good friend and supporter recently with the unexpected passing of Jon Gilmore of North Easton on October 4th. Jon was a member of a family that can trace its roots to the early days of Easton. He was keenly aware of his family's role in Easton's history. His ancestors ran the toll gate on the old Taunton and Boston Turnpike (Route 138) after the town was forced to extend the road through the swamp into Raynham. More recently, many of you may remember his grandparents Wallace and Anna Gilmore, or Jon's father and mother Robert and Janet.

Jon was a graduate of Oliver Ames High School Class of 1973. He then attended Sylvania Tech and RCA Broadcast Tech. Jon worked as a broadcast editor and producer who worked on many national and local TV productions such as ABC News, NBC Sports, and 20/20. He also had a secret security clearance with the Federal Government to work on films about several wars. He was awarded the Clio Award in Broadcast Editing.

Jon Gilmore continued his family's legacy of philanthropy. He supported the Society in a number of ways. It was through his generosity and urging that our website was established. Jon also funded it for the first year. He volunteered his time and professional editing talents to film an interview with Hazel Varella. In recent years, he donated a number of items to the Society. Included in these were various papers from his grandparents, magazines and books of historical interest. Perhaps most importantly, he gave an exceptional oil painting of his great-great grandfather, the industrialist E. W. Gilmore. The Society, with the help of a donation from Jon, had the painting restored and reframed. Jon had an opportunity to show it to some of his family during a recent visit. He felt very strongly that these items should go where they would be appreciated and shared with others. The Society is honored to have been his choice.

The Society extends sincere sympathy to Jon's wife Sheryl and sons Matthew and Benjamin, as well as his large extended family. Our wish for them can best be expressed in Jon's favorite way to end his emails, an ending that uniquely captures the essence of this humble, gentle man: peace.

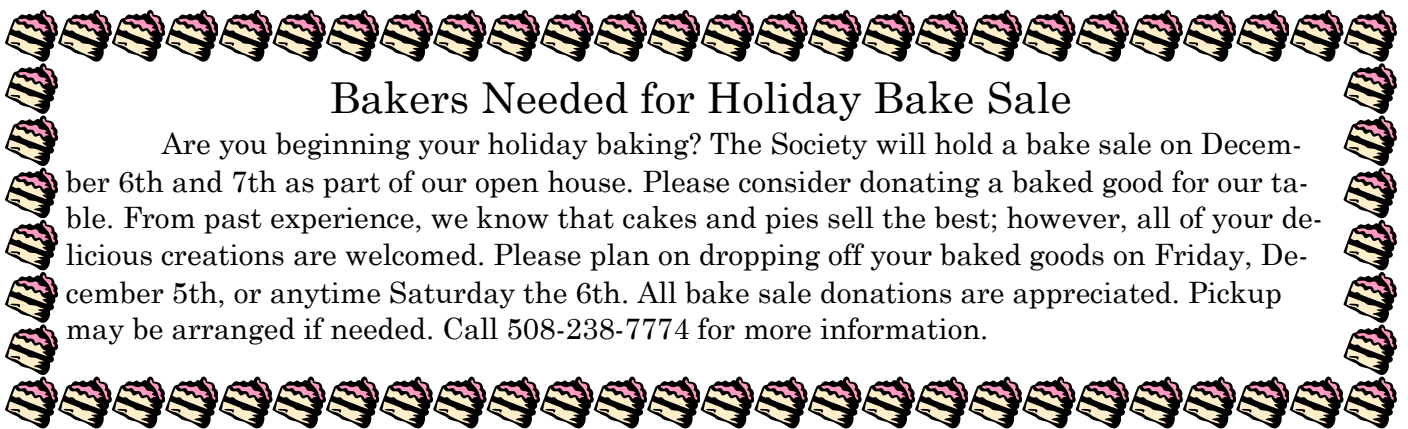
Special Holiday Raffle Being Held

The Society is raffling off a beautifully framed and matted lithograph of a bird's-eye view map of North Easton, as it appeared in 1881. The lithograph is faithfully reproduced from the original. Tickets are being sold at \$1 each, or 6 for \$5. You may purchase your tickets at the Society between now and the drawing, which will be held on December 14th, 2008 at 4 P.M.

The Society expresses special thanks to the donor, Christine Owen, and is grateful for her generosity.

Bakers Needed for Holiday Bake Sale

Are you beginning your holiday baking? The Society will hold a bake sale on December 6th and 7th as part of our open house. Please consider donating a baked good for our table. From past experience, we know that cakes and pies sell the best; however, all of your delicious creations are welcomed. Please plan on dropping off your baked goods on Friday, December 5th, or anytime Saturday the 6th. All bake sale donations are appreciated. Pickup may be arranged if needed. Call 508-238-7774 for more information.



EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 60TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

“What a great place to live” was the concluding comment about Easton made by Mrs. David Ames at the sixtieth anniversary Gala of the Society held in Alumni Hall at Stonehill College September 20th. Mrs. Ames described her first visit to Easton in 1937 for a special luncheon at “Sheep Pasture” for Olivia Ames, the daughter of Second Lieutenant Oliver Ames who had been killed in World War I. Her reminiscences included what Easton was like when she moved to Easton before World War II: “Easton was a very small town of about 5,000. Main Street was the center of everything.” Her description of the first decade of the Society included “the finest hour was the production of a play written by Amory Parker” and Mrs. Graham Smith. (Editor’s note-the Society hopes to produce it again). At the conclusion of her moving presentation, Mrs. Ames received a standing ovation and was awarded the Benefactor Award.

More than one hundred people attended this very special celebration co-chaired by Karen Cacciapuoti, Nancy DeLuca and President Deborah MacPhee. Each of these ladies spoke briefly at the beginning of the formal program. The other members of the committee were Sherry Little, Cheryl Morrison, and Faith Rich.

The decorative tables with the Richardson-red table clothes with floral arrangements prepared by the Easton Garden Club created a warm and friendly atmosphere for this special evening. During the first hour guests viewed the extensive displays of the Society’s history prepared by Curator Frank Meninno while viewing a fascinating and comprehensive video history of the Society developed by Edmund Hands. Congratulations are due to all who were involved in this beautiful setting and extensive history. Many friends had the opportunity to relive special memories. The Society was honored to have also in attendance Mrs. Oliver F. Ames, whose husband was one of the four donors of the Station, and Ms. Judy King, whose parents established the King Trust Fund for the Society.

The Leadership Award was presented to Hazel Varella, who will have a tree planted at the Station in her honor next spring. She shared with those present the experience of exploring the station the night the Society received the gift from Messrs. John S. Ames, Jr. David Ames, and William A. Parker, and Senator Oliver F. Ames November 7, 1969. The contributions of the hundred of volunteers throughout the years were noted, and she concluded with an “aerial” tour of North Easton and the many contributions that exist today given by the Ames Family. At the conclusion of the evening guests received a copy of “A Glimpse of the Past”- Easton Historical Society 1948-2008 which was funded by Jack and Judy Luke. (Any one who would like a copy of the news release about the Society’s sixty-year history printed in the Easton Journal should contact Hazel Varella). Additional copies of the “A Glimpse of the Past” have been printed and are for sale at the Station.

A VERY SPECIAL CELEBRATION WAS ENJOYED BY ALL

Special thanks are extended to the following people who supported the Society Gala.

Benefactors: Mr. and Mrs. James MacPhee, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Misiewicz, Mr. and Mrs. Mackenzie Smith, Mr. and Mrs. John Varella.

Friends: Mr. Dan Amorim, Ms. Phyllis Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. John Boyajian, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Boynton, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Cacciapuoti, Mr. and Mrs. John DeLuca, Mr. Edmund Hands, Ms. Miriam E. Jackson, Mr. Robert J. Kane, Mr. and Mrs. James Kenneally, Judge and Mrs. Leon Lombardi, Mr. and Mrs. Charles McCarthy, Mr. and Mrs. Leo McEvoy, Mr. and Mrs. John Morley, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Morse, Mr. Larry Mowatt and Ms. Diane Cella, Mr. and Mrs. David Olson, Ms. Lillian Randall, Mr. and Mrs. Al Sousa, Mr. and Mrs. David Varella, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin White, Mr. and Mrs. George Yelle.



Mary T. Bodio with one of her two paintings which were the evenings raffle prizes.

Mrs. David Ames, left, and Mrs. Oliver Ames, right, with Mrs. Hazel Varella.



Past Society presidents, from left to right, Frank Meninno, Duncan Oliver, Edwin White, Hazel Varella, Edmund Hands with current president Deborah MacPhee.

Past presidents who were unable to attend and not available for photo are Dr. Robert Misiewicz, William Holland, Karen Hays, Richard Hill.



A beautifully decorated Alumni Hall.



A sample of the historical items on display.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

3 photo albums probably related to the Mayall family; Telephone Topics magazine featuring the 1938 hurricane; Cottage Hearth magazine, 1888; ribbon from the Easton Historical Society 1974 antique auto meet that belonged to the donor's father; 2 books – Quincy Adams Sawyer; book – Sartain's Magazine, 1849 and 1850; book – Histories and Antiquities of Massachusetts Towns, 1841; Boy Scout Handbook, 1919; 1925 Farmer's Almanac; Taunton Gazette and Atlas, 1914; book – General Tom Thumb and His Lady, 1st edition, 1976; brochure of Historic Plymouth; from Dr. Timothy W. Robbins. Original photo of the class of 1916, Oliver Ames High School; from Pauline Krish. Collection of Eastoner's, from 1949-1950's; from Wayne Wardwell. Roll of Historic Easton stickers; Year 2000 celebration cancel postcards with different train stamps; 1938 Fireman's Ball brochure; 1936 Eastoner; very first Massachusetts vanity plate issued for "Easton" in 1966; 2 parade banners from the 250th and 275th anniversary parades; 275th anniversary coins in velvet bags; small flag for "Easton 275th"; book about Dr. Stevenson; Mary Bodio cards; photos of parade and time capsule; Easton "2000" badges; diskettes with information on the 275th anniversary; 275th anniversary iron trivets; from David Gardner. Porcelain bell, OAHs class of 1948 40th reunion; 6 Eastoner's from the 1940's and 1950's; copy of graduation program, 1884; class of 1938 OAHs class containing notes from members, 1978; class list with addresses; individual class photos from 1934 – 1938; from Joe Camara. Bird's eye view photo of North Easton, about 1897; poster of town bylaws adopted March 1882; from Elizabeth Barrows. Class of 1972 OAHs 35th reunion information, book, CD and photos; From Chet Flynn. 40 pamphlets of "Blanche Ames and Women's Suffrage" by James Kenneally; prints of Women's Suffrage cartoon posters drawn by Blanche Ames; 2 books – "A Collector's Recollections" by George Arthur Plimpton; book – Oakes Ames Jottings of a Harvard Botanist; book – Window on Our World – Plimpton Papers, Pauline Ames Plimpton, editor; 2 books – Ancestry of Blanche Butler Ames and Adelbert Ames; book – Adelbert Ames – Broken Oaths by Blanche Ames Ames; copies of the book "Orchids at Christmas" and a variety of prints of Blanche's political cartoons and orchid drawings; from Oakes Ames Plimpton. Papers from the estate of Jedediah Packard of Easton, including cost of hearse, grave, advertising, and inventory, early 1860's; Union Army discharge for Peleg Randall of Easton, 1863; booklet – Outdoor Adventures in Easton by Karen Hays; Easton Founders Gala book, napkins and invitation; Easton Public School directory, 1978-79; Distinguished Service banquet, 1981; Richardson / Olmsted school education booklets, 1997; booklet – 100 Years of Memories 1896-1996; booklet – Ware Collection of Glass Flowers, 1947, Oakes Ames; book - 75 Years of Church History in Easton, 1892-1967; North Easton Savings Bank 100th Anniversary books; Hockomock Wonder Wetlands books; Yankee Magazine, March 1992, story on Richardson; book on history of Ames, Iowa; booklet – Blanche Ames Artist and Activist; Easton Cooperative Bank 100th Anniversary book; Easton Dual Celebration book; Magazine – American Heritage, December 1992, story related to Easton; student histories of Easton (Sheep Pasture by Ingrid, and Easton by Albert Hamilton); 2001 Lions Club Holiday Lighting Festival booklet; 6 reprints of old Harpers Weeklies; advertising giveaway- Sunshine Crackers baby poster on stick, with ad from Ericson's Store on Center St. on reverse; Chronicle of the Early American Industries with Pool article; Evangelical Congregational Church directory, 1971; Immaculate Conception 100th Anniversary book, 1971; Langwater Guernseys Sale Book, 1960; Langwater Guernseys Sale Book, 1925; North Easton Savings Bank calendar, 1999; Book- Growing Up at Sheep Pasture, inscribed and originally from K. M. Baker, who had Olivia Ames as his nurse at Fort Devens; Easton Jr. High Yearbook, 1983; Southeastern Regional High School cap, gown and tassel, blue and white, worn by Frank Meninno at graduation in 1977; O.A.H.S. yellow cap, blue and gold tassel worn by Anne-Marie (Dickinson) Meninno at graduation, 1982; from Anne-Marie and Frank Meninno.

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

Great Gift Ideas

Thanks to the generosity of Oakes Ames Plimpton, we are pleased to offer a limited amount of high quality prints of orchids and political cartoons drawn by his grandmother, Blanche Ames. Blanche was a national figure in the woman's suffrage movement, and her political cartoons depicting various suffrage topics will please the politicians in your home. Those with an eye for art will appreciate the exquisite drawings of orchids done to accompany the research conducted on orchids by her husband Oakes Ames of Borderland. These are reprinted on high quality paper and are suitable for framing. We also have available a limited number of the book Orchids at Christmas, a collection of drawings and poetry taken from Blanche's annual holiday cards. Another offering made possible by Mr. Plimpton is the booklet Blanche Ames and Women's Suffrage by Stonehill College professor James Kenneally.

David Gardner recently donated iron trivets commemorating the town's 275th anniversary in 2000. These round trivets, painted black, feature the official logo design that incorporates the tower of the Ames Free Library. He also donated a small quantity of bronze coins from the 275th celebration. These will be sold on a first come-first served basis.

The Society has also reprinted the very popular "Red Book", officially titled Looking Back at Easton, Massachusetts. This excellent collection of photos from our archives has not been available for many years, and would make a great gift for the historian in your family.

As always, we have a selection of items that make excellent stocking stuffers and gifts. These include pewter shovel ornaments, Easton magnets, antique Easton postcards, Shoveltown tee-shirts, and books. Many items are \$10 or less, so the gift-giving can be easier on the purse or wallet. Plus, members save 10% on purchases!

You might want to consider giving the gift of membership in the Society to someone special. We are sure they will enjoy reading with great interest about our wonderful town and our great history, and you will be helping to grow your Society as well!

Help Your Neighbor This Holiday Season

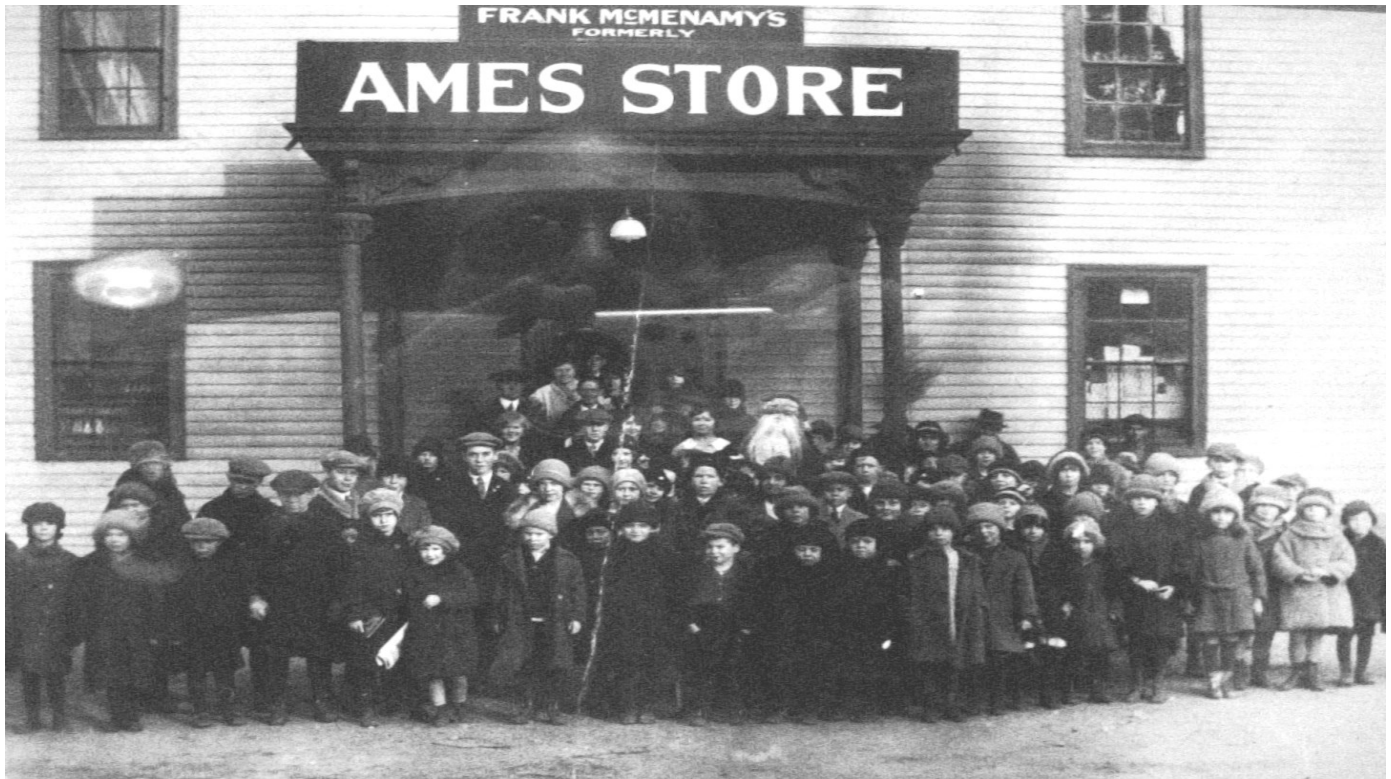
The Easton Food Pantry has put in a call for help! They anticipate serving upwards of 100 families this season. To help them out, the Society will have a food drive on December 6th and 7th. Non-perishable canned or packaged foods are needed. We will also be collecting cash donations for the pantry. All donations are welcomed and appreciated!

Thanks For The Bottles And Cans!

The Society raised \$130 at our recent fall bottle and can drive. Proceeds will be used towards the restoration of the ceiling in the Women's Waiting Room. Thanks to all who supported this activity, and to Ken Martin for continuing this important fundraiser!

Wanted: Stanley Rice

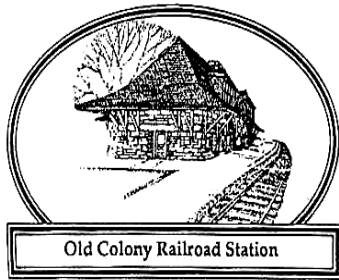
The Society is looking for a photograph of longtime town clerk Stanley Rice. If you wouldn't mind checking your photo albums or scrap books, we would appreciate it. Please contact us if you have such a photo that we might be able to borrow and copy. Thank you!



Santa Claus Comes To Easton!

This image may be the earliest recorded visit of Santa Claus in Easton. Taken outside the former Ames Store on Main Street, across from the Ames Free Library, it dates to about 1910-1920. Santa, of course, is the white whiskered jolly old fellow to the right of the doorway.

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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www.eastonhistoricalsociety.org

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