

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TRAIN TRACKS



Volume 10, Issue 2

DECEMBER 2009

CALENDAR

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

*** Please note that even though we have the best intentions, the New England winter weather may not cooperate with our plans. If the weather is bad we may cancel an event. Please call ahead to see if the event is still being held. Thank you!

Saturday, December 5th, Holiday Open House, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Bake sale, Easton Garden Club Greens Sale

Sunday, December 6th, Holiday Open House, 1-5 PM with Mary Bodio tentatively scheduled from 2:30-4 P.M.

Sunday, December 13th, Open House, 1-5 P.M. Last chance for getting some great holiday gifts!

Sunday, January 10th, Open House, 1-5 P.M. Curator's Choice!

Sunday, February 14th, Open House, 1-5 P.M. National History Day Event with 8th grade student projects on display.

Looking ahead...

March Open House, Ice Cutting on Monte's Pond.

Chowder and Chatter, April 6th

April 11th Open House, Kids Discovery Day. Mini-tours, show and tell, more!

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.

SOCIETY HONORS THE AMES AND PARKER FAMILIES DURING 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Left to right, representatives of the original donors of the Old Colony Railroad Station to the Society who spoke at the 40th Anniversary Celebration: Mrs. Oliver F. Ames (representing the late Senator Oliver F. Ames), Mrs. David Ames (representing the late David Ames, Sr.), former State Representative John S. Ames III (representing the late John S. Ames, Jr.) and Frances Parker DeLacvievier (representing her late grandfather William A. Parker). Many members of the Ames and Parker families were also in attendance.



2009 Holiday Season

Saturday, December 5th, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Glass Ornaments, Bake Sale, Garden Club Greens Sale

Sunday, December 6th, 1-5 P.M.

Mary Bodio Ornament Signing (Tentative) from 2:30-4 P.M.

Sunday, December 13th, 1-5 P.M.

Daily Door Prizes courtesy of Emmy's Hair Salon and Spa

Society Gift Certificate Raffle

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—David Ames, Jr., Daniel B. Amorim, Nancy DeLuca, Debra Salisbury, Robert J. Wooster
Curator—Frank T. Meninno

The Station Master

President Deborah MacPhee

On November 7, 2009, a 40th anniversary building re-dedication ceremony was held at the former Old Colony Railroad Station to commemorate the generous gift of the Station to the Easton Historical Society.

The Station came to house the Society in the fall of 1969, when members of the Ames Families and Parker Family recognized the need for a more permanent home for the Society. At that time, the Society had been in operation for about twenty years. The Society had begun accumulating historical artifacts, which were being stored at the Ames Free Library. The late Mr. David Ames, State Senator Oliver F. Ames, Mr. John S. Ames, Jr., and Mr. William A. Parker purchased and donated the station building and grounds to the Society. This was a remarkably generous gift, and one that has helped the Society to this day.

When the guests arrived at the Station for the 40th celebration, they were greeted by the warm smell of vanilla candles, beautiful flowers, and fall decorations. The evening began with several members of the Ames families and the Parker family speaking. Mrs. David Ames, Mrs. Oliver Ames, Mr. John S. Ames III, and Mrs. Frances Parker DeLacvievier represented the families of the original donors. Hazel Varella spoke about receiving the keys to the Station and the building exploration that took place. To commemorate the occasion, a bronze plaque was unveiled. The plaque reads "In appreciation of the Ames Families and the Parker Family. Re-dedication November 7, 2009". After the speeches, guests viewed the Society's exhibits and enjoyed wine and cheese. This was truly a wonderful evening to enjoy with our distinguished guests and members.

In closing, I would like to thank Hazel Varella, Ed Hands, Frank Meninno, and Joan Lundgren for all of their assistance with this wonderful event.

Curator's Corner

Curator / Caretaker Frank T. Meninno

The summer and fall may have been wet, but the rain didn't dampen the spirits of some intrepid tourists who recently visited Easton. During one very wet weekend I was honored to do a walking tour of North Easton for the Lexington Historical Society. They braved a steady rain to see the Society, Unity Church, Oakes Ames Memorial Hall, Ames Free Library, the Ames shovel factories and the garden at Unity Close. After several hours the group departed very happy. Imagine that- a group from such an historical place as Lexington thinks *we* have a great history! That walk was followed by an equally drenching afternoon walk for a group of museum professionals, including one who was associated with the Smithsonian Institution. I guess word is getting out about us!

Genealogical searches often result in a visit to Easton as descendants try to discover their family history. I recently had the opportunity to take several people to see the site of the Randall family homes, and the former Dean Mill which is located where the Randall's' began erecting the first mill in town around 1695. These descendants were pleased that their ancestors have been remembered. How much more special it is that the town recently voted to save the mill from destruction!

As the year closes I want to thank each and every one of you for your continued support and for friendships that have been made. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and may the blessings and the peace of the season be yours!

The Society, in addition to celebrating the 40th anniversary of the gift of the Station, was also involved in a number of other activities.

September 12th members enjoyed an afternoon at "Queset" learning about the extraordinary attempt to kidnap President Lincoln. Dr. William Hanna's fascinating presentation was enjoyed by all. The October 27th meeting was held at the new corporate headquarters of the North Easton Savings Bank with Edwin White and Karen Carter as hosts and Edmund Hands as the featured speaker. We all learned about "The Passion of Stained Glass" in his outstanding Power Point presentation.

Fundraising involved the September 19th yard sale and Ken Martin's bottle and can drive October 10th. Also, many items were sold at the annual NRT Harvest Fair at "Sheep Pasture". These activities raised almost nine hundred dollars. They were also great opportunities to meet new visitors.

The popular Open Houses in October and November featured the annual Train Day and the honoring of Easton's veterans. Pat Baker's story-telling and group-singing were one of the highlights of Train Day.

Unfortunately the Spooky Hay Rides had to be canceled due to the weather. The above activities required extensive preparation and commitment by members of the Board and the curator for which we are all grateful.



2009 Holiday Season

Believe it or not, it will soon be that "most wonderful time of the year!" The holidays will soon be upon us, and the Society is busily preparing for our holiday open houses. The Station will be dressed in festive attire, the coffee will be hot, the conversation jovial and the atmosphere will be, well, merry of course!

We will be open during the annual Lions Club Holiday Festival which will be held on Saturday and Sunday, December 5th-6th. We will be open on the 5th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Easton Garden Club will be joining us that day with their annual holiday greens sale. They will also be selling tickets for their Holiday House Tour. The Society will have available the new 2009 glass ornament featuring the 1717 Josiah Keith house as captured by the wonderful artwork of Mary Bodio. We will also have a bake sale. On Sunday the 6th we will be open from 1-5 p.m., and Mary Bodio will hopefully be here around 2:30 P.M. to sign your ornaments. Our last open house for 2009 will be held on Sunday the 13th from 1-5 p.m.

Thanks to the generosity of Emmy's Hair Salon and Spa in South Easton we will give away a door prize at the end of each open house—a wonderful gift basket from Emmy's! We will also raffle off a \$50 gift certificate to the Society store during the December 13th open house. Chances are \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

Need some great gifts? How about a family tree chart, in a traditional Penn Dutch motif? We have reprinted some books that have been unavailable for some time (Looking Back at Easton, Easton in Pictures, Easton's History as Shown Through Maps). Copies of the late Harold Keith's book, When I Was Growing Up, are available. Why not give a gift membership to someone special? We also have Shoveltown long and short sleeve tee shirts, train whistles, pewter shovel ornaments and other items, many \$10 or under, to whet your holiday shopping appetite. We do hope that many of you will be able to come in and share in the holiday spirit.



Past Memories of Bay Road and Life on the Farm in 1938 -1942

By Althea Russell Thornton

Part Four

The house on Bay Road had a shelf at the top of the stairs. There was a large steel engraving print from the Library of Congress, Sherman's March to the Sea, above the shelf matted with a water stain and a large gold frame. This later disappeared. There was a viewing room for meetings and funerals. The shelf kept the casket horizontal while going up and down the stairs. There were three bedrooms and a linen closet off the hall, and closets with a small attic and pull down stairs to the back shed. The vent from the kitchen stove was the only heat and we used to huddle around it. That room had shells and a shelf with cabinets above and down below for storing utensils for serving guests at various functions. The windows often were thick with frost and beautiful patterns. The upstairs windows had very heavy frost with beautiful patterns on them. At the end of the back shed was the out house, fitted with three different size openings and covers and very cold in the winter (one size for papa, one size for momma and then toddler sizes). Inside was an old soapstone sink with a hand pump that had to be primed. Luckily plumbing was the first upgrade. The tool room off the back shed connected to the horse and cow barn and hayloft, with stairs up to a loft above the cow stalls. In the winter there was a pig sty under the cow barn. Oh! That was mean to feed them and the other animals in winter before school. We had to start the wood hot air furnace, clean up, eat and get ready to go to the school on Bay Road opposite Rockland Street. We would hurry past the Dunbar Cemetery where the huge black bull was chained, quickly and quietly as fast as we could. He needed a lot of respect! If we stopped, he would kick up his heels, give you a very mean look and snort at us.

Later we walked to Rockland Street to catch Mr. Buck's old rickety bus to the Poquanticut School at Rockland Street and Allen Road. If we missed it we had to walk the rest of the way. The school had a hall, a four class room, coat room and a health / teachers room. There were two outhouses, one each for boys and girls. Miss Murch, and a dentist who pulled molars out with Novocain, came from North Easton as well as a visiting doctor. The visiting nurse got us boots one winter and we treated them like gold. We had holes in our shoes like a lot of kids in Easton. We enjoyed hearing the school bell ring (it was in the belfry at what is now the VFW Hall). We had a few rambunctious boys, Ron and Herb, and a big girl who swore at us in Portuguese. We never told. There was one black family, John Nunziato.

In June on the way home from school, there were wild sweet strawberries in front of the cemetery, with blueberries and huckleberries in the summer. Mrs. Johnson always had apples in season for us kids on the way home from school Mr. Johnson gave us tours of the herd and the best milking cows, told us how to keep everything scrupulously clean in the milk room. We saw new calves and kittens. The next family were Mr. and Mrs. Clint Rhodin. They raised chickens and vegetables and sold us eggs.

Our entertainment, centered in the house, was radio. We listened to Roosevelt's Fireside Chats, Stella Dallas, One Life to Live, The Lone Ranger, The Green Hornet, The Shadow. One Man's Family and music. Sunday evening there was a classical music hour, but my memory fails me here. The floor length mahogany RCA Victrola with the record cabinet underneath played old one-sided Caruso records and RCA recording stars like Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald. The needles were about one inch long and didn't last long. We would up the speed with a crank on the outside of the player. After use we put it back in the cabinet. We had an old upright piano with a few of the ivories missing, guitars, ukuleles. Mom could pick up and play any instrument that was brought in. Four of us girls would each take a part and harmonize while mom played the melody and taught us the words. I still have sheet music from the 30's and 40's. I wanted piano lessons but mom couldn't understand. She was a doer, not a teacher. She just said to me, "What's the matter? You can see and read." I was crushed and needed help. I muddled my way through and my favorite was Going Home by Jan Sebaelus. I made up my mind to teach myself and thought that was too much work. So I translated everything I heard into the scale and played it in the key of G or C. So easy!

Continued next page...

We had no paper to write on. I still feel regrets for taking the cover pages out of Theodore Roosevelt's Complete Journals. The bottom shelf of the bookcase in the dining room was full of those heavy books. I wonder what happened to them. My father may have taken them when he left home.

I had a love of the land, and home, and never lost it. We had a 24 acre farm in those days when we knew everyone and their personalities. I remember visiting with Mrs. Della Stackpole. Her front hall was stacked with newspapers waist high on both sides to keep out the cold. She was very elderly. You had to respect their privacy and which people would be friends. It wasn't good all the time, but we tried. My brother had to be kept in tow. Mom was in the hospital many times, so we looked out for each other. There was a terrible blizzard one year, when Mr. Gibbs was plowing the road at the end of the property and my father went to see what was wrong. He was half frozen! Dad brought him back to the house and took care of him. He saved his life. That snow came up to the south side of the porch and covered the second story windows. We went out of the window and slid down to shovel us out. I can't remember what year that was.

On warm summer days we would run out in shorts. It was fun! We owed our few trips to Lake Winnecunnett in Norton to Arthur Rhodin. During the hottest days, when it was too much to walk, he would pick us up and give us a ride. He had a bad back but was a kind and gentle person. Mr. Blood was the Rawleigh Man and Johnny Farrell was the ice man. He filled the old lead lined ice chest. He always gave us ice chips on the hottest days. Our house number was 132, and Mr. Eddy was the mailman.

We walked to the Evangelical Congregational Church at Easton Center when the weather was good. Mr. Blood was the organist. Mrs. Bertha Jacquist was also there. Mom taught Bible stories as well.

We learned to farm. There were four large fields for vegetables. We got wood from the back woods and hauled it up to the barn on slats with Jerry, our old work horse. We had to bring in the wood to fire up the old hot air furnace, which had to be done first thing. I remember Jerry dying of pneumonia. They slung him up in a hammock and tried to save him. I had a bad feeling, and sure enough he had to be put down.

We took care of the animals first. One morning my sister Tina was ill and mom asked me to milk our Jersey cow, Bessie. I went to the barn, talked to her and patted her rump. Oh no! She gave me the look. She twitched her tail. I could tell she was not accepting a stand in. I took the pail, sat on the stool and started to milk. I got very little milk, she kicked her back foot, sent the bucket flying and I was done. Cow's are very sensitive creatures. All this before cleaning up and having breakfast. Mom sure was disappointed!

We always spent a lot of time outside exploring, making up our own games, digging to China, finding things edible and visiting people. I was just glad to be alive in this wonderful country, living and working hard. There were no streetlights, lots of insect sounds, very dark and a wonderful view of the sky and stars. We even saw the Northern Lights one night.

Now all the farms, Gooch's, Rhodin's, Johnson's, Harco Orchards, Cleverly's, Mrs. Stackpole, mostly dairy farms are gone but not forgotten. Surely that big black bull next to the cemetery isn't forgotten. We sure gave him a lot of respect!

We had seven children in our family, two boys and five girls. I was the "middle one." We were the children of Walter and Rhea Russell. Her maiden name was Beulah Jane Squibb. She was born in Chelsea, MA. Her parents were John and Ida Squibb from New Foundland, Canada. They were instrumental in opening the Salvation Army in Chelsea with Evangeline Booth from England. I still have pictures of this group.

The Easton Historical Society thanks Althea Thornton for taking the time to share her memories of a time gone by with us. We hope this will encourage you to do the same! You need not be a wonderful writer to do so. Just jot down, or record, your experiences and stories and send them to us. We'll do the rest!

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BAKE SALE

Attention all bakers! As part of our holiday festivities we will be holding a bake sale during the weekend of December 5-6th. We know that we are blessed with many excellent cooks, and ask that you would consider providing us with some tastefully tempting tarts, cakes or pies for our sale. Maybe you have your own holiday specialty, that special sweet that is only made this time of year. Why not make an extra one for the Society? Items may be dropped off on Friday, December 4th before 5 P.M., or the morning of the sale. If you can bake, but can't deliver, please call 508-238-7774 for pickup to be arranged. The Society appreciates your time, talents and goodies!

My Brother's Keeper Christmas Collection Drive

Can you imagine yourself not getting a gift this holiday season? Sadly many children may be in that very circumstance. To help out, the Society will be collecting donations of new toys for the Christmas Collection Drive for My Brother's Keeper. My Brother's Keeper is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping area families. Last year, over 2000 families, 5000 children and 3000 adults from all backgrounds were the recipients of help from this wonderful organization. We will be collecting new toys of any type during all our December open houses. You do not have to wrap the toys. Imagine the joy you could bring to some child when he or she opens their gift! For more information go to www.mybrotherskeeper.org.

"Who are we" update!

Thanks to Gil Heino, Linda E. Williams and Bill Camara most of the people in this photo have been identified. The photo was taken in 1952 at Frothingham Park, opening day for the Little League. Here are the names we have that match these smiling faces:

First Row, left to right—? Randall, unknown, Bill Vendt

Second Row—John Downey, Dickie Lind, Edmund DelGado, Gary Sullivan, Bob Silva, ? Carey

Third Row—Paul Roman, unknown, Bob Varney, ? Johnson, Lawrence Tingley, Gil Heino, Ellery Peterson, Mr. Carlson.



As you can see, there are still a few question marks that need names. Hopefully we will be able to gather the rest of them one day.

Many thanks to Linda, Gil and Bill for filling in as many blank spaces as they did.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Twelve original deeds dated between the 1820's to the 1860's listing land sales by and to Jefferson Jones and his wife Letitia for property between Easton and Stoughton, from Richard W. Capen (great-grandson of Jefferson and Letitia Jones) and Pamela Webber; photo of Little League team, 1951, Class of 1959 photo, Graduation Exercises for the Easton High School dated 1892, Oliver Ames Graduation Exercises, 1915, Roll of Honor Card for servicemen, Class of 1918 junior high school photo, Unity Church Sunday School pins, several news clippings including Olive Gurney singing with the Harmony Trio and Lawrence Gurney with the Shedad Grotto Quartette, copy of photo of Walter Smith inscribed to Lawrence Gurney, paper—Remembering “Pop” Gurney, Anna C. Ames Band concert card, all from Patricia Baker; Large collection of papers including many from past Society events, the 250th Anniversary Ball, “Greetings from Easton” postcards, photo of Oakes Ames Memorial Hall, from Judy Martin; photos of the Somerville and Kent families, from Ron Somerville; Bowles Brothers Silver Spring bottle case, from Jerry Connors; Town Reports and miscellaneous other reports, from Carol Leonard; metal oil container, possibly for filling street lights, from Tom O'Brien; copper printers plate for the Alger-Southworth wedding (Bob and Jean Alger), photo of the Southworth house on Pine Street in Eastondale, Unity Class notebook dated 1914, photo of “Cousin Mary” costume party dated 1946, miscellaneous postcards, from Bob and Jean Alger; Union Pacific Overland Route china circa 1900, from Mary Ames; flag used to open Browning Club meetings for many decades, 1820's account book from the Fuller family, from Mary Fuller; United States flag marked A.B.W. Co. (Ames, Baldwin & Wyoming) 1941 measuring 9' x 15', from Jeanette Stone Picchi; Monte's Ice House photo and articles with CD, from Diane C. Carr; photo of John S. Ames, Jr. “sparring” with Rocky Marciano, 1958, taken at “Springhill”, from Charlton Ames; card game, “Flinch”, from Priscilla Almquist-Olsen; a Christmas Tree from Mr. and Mrs. Francis Meninno.

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



The Easton Historical Society wishes Rose (Mitrano) Slavitz a very happy 100th birthday! Mrs. Slavitz was the first kindergarten teacher hired for the Center School. Please join us in celebrating this milestone and send her a card. She would like to hear from her colleagues and former students. Cards may be sent by addressing them as follows: Rose Slavitz, Island Terrace, 57 Long Point Road, Lakeville, MA. 02347.

Holiday Door Prizes!

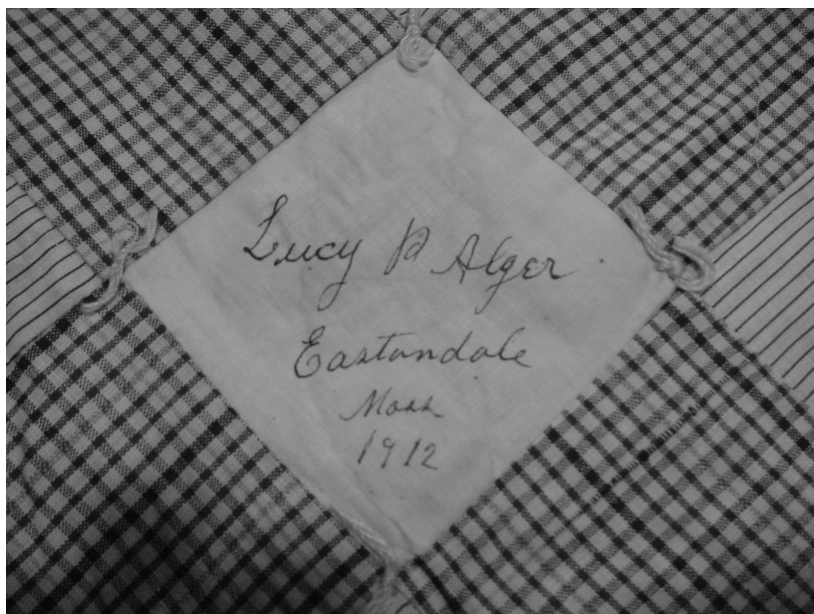
Emmy's Hair Salon and Spa, 860 Washington Street, S. Easton (508-230-2825) has been a loyal Society supporter. This year Emmy's has donated three wonderful gift baskets to give away as door prizes! The gift baskets are sure to contain some wonderful items that will make three lucky winners very happy.

Come in during our holiday hours on Saturday, December 5th from 10 A.M. and 5 P.M., Sunday, December 6th from 1-5 P.M. and Sunday, December 13th from 1-5 P.M., and enter your name to win one of these special prizes! Please, one entry per person. The drawing will be held on each December open house around 4 P.M. Winners will be notified by phone.

The Society thanks Emmy's for their continued great support and generous contribution!

WHO ARE WE?

We are trying to solve a mystery for someone. Recently we were shown a quilt that consisted of 49 squares. Each square is in an "X" pattern with different fabrics, and each is signed by the quilter who made the square. Most of the squares are dated 1912 or 1913. The question is, who are these people, and why did they make the quilt? Were they members of the same club, or other organization? Was it a class project? We hope you can help by recognizing some of the names here. Most of the names are from Eastondale or South Easton, but other squares were made by people in Brockton,



West Bridgewater, Raynham and even as far away as Braintree, Kingston and West Lynn, MA. Here are the "local" names. From Eastondale: Jennet Winberg, Clara Crocker, Mamie Willis, Millie Bosworth, Jeanette Packard, Alice Lothrop, Christina Isabel MacIntosh, Munroe Shepherd Willis, Clara Snell, Lucy Alger, Lucy Lunn, Jennie Brown, Sadie LaShures, Lavinia Lunn, and Margaret Blood. From South Easton: Elizabeth Cady, Ella Randall, Mrs. Charles Hennigar, H. Frances Lackey, Ruth Alger, Frances Tripp, Harriet Williams and Alice Hall. From North Easton: Emmaletta Keith. Hopefully some descendents can help us identify the common thread that bonds all of these people together. I look forward to hearing from you!

Address changing? Please tell us!

Address Service Requested

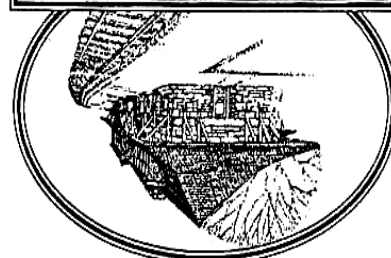
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Old Colony Railroad Station



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