

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TRAIN TRACKS



Volume 12, Issue 2

Winter 2011

CALENDAR

All events are held at the Easton Historical Society unless otherwise noted. As the winter weather sometimes refuses to cooperate, we recommend you call us in the event of a storm to see if we are open!

Saturday and Sunday, December 3rd and 4th, Lions Club Annual Holiday Festival. Society open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, 1-5 p.m. on Sunday. The Easton Garden Club Greens Sale will be at the Society on Saturday as well! New 2011 ornament and Volume 2 of Reminiscences available! John Ventresco ornament signing Sunday from 2-4 p.m.

Sunday, December 11th, Open House, 1-5 P.M. A good time to do your holiday shopping!

Sunday, January 8th, Open House, 1-5 p.m.

Sunday, January 29th, National History Day Open House, noon-5 p.m. See what great work our 8th grade students are doing! Snow date will be February 5th, noon-5 p.m.

Sunday, February 12th, Open House, 1-5 p.m.

Sunday, March 11th, Open House, 1-5 p.m.

Save the date for the April 12th "Chowder and Chatter"!

Did you know? The Society is open during the week. If you see the lights on, come in and visit!

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.

Happy, Happy Holidays!

Well, well, well! Where has the year gone? Once again your Society finds itself preparing for a very busy holiday season, and we hope you will be a part of it! As you spend time enjoying the festivities all weekend, be sure to visit with us.

Saturday, December 3rd kicks off the celebration weekend with the annual Easton Lions Club Holiday Festival. The Society will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will feature fresh baked goodies (a real time-saver for you), lots of great gifts under \$15 including the new 2011 ornament featuring "Unity Close" and Volume 2 of Reminiscences! The Easton Garden Club will once again join us with their Holiday Greens sale. The beauty of their collective talent manifests brilliantly at this time of year, so come on in and enjoy the festive atmosphere and warm coffee! On Sunday, the 4th, we will be open from 1-5 p.m. John Ventresco will sign ornaments between 2-4 p.m. You will find a warm welcome inside! You will also find great gift ideas, many that can be mailed inexpensively to someone who lives away. Of course, there will be warm drinks and goodies as well!

The Society will open once again on Sunday, December 11th from 1-5 p.m. If you were busy the week before, this is a great time to get some shopping done. Looking for gifts for the office party? We can help. Perhaps something special for a great volunteer? We can do that too! Most of our sale items are \$10 or under, making shopping during this difficult economy much easier. And don't forget, as a member, you are entitled to a 10% discount on your purchases!

We hope you will drop in during the December open houses. However, we are open during the week and by appointment as well. So if you are in need of something special, give us a call!

The Society wishes all of you a happy, healthy and safe holiday celebration!

*The Easton Historical Society Newsletter "Train Tracks" is published quarterly by the Easton Historical Society.
Officers: President—Kenneth J. Michel, 1st Vice President—Edmund C. Hands, 2nd Vice President—David Ames, Jr.
Treasurer—Nancy DeLuca, Recording / Corresponding Secretary—Hazel L. Varella
Directors—Patricia Baker, Melanie-Jane L. Deware, Judge Leon J. Lombardi, Debra Salisbury, Robert J. Wooster
Immediate Past President and Director—Deborah MacPhee Curator—Frank T. Meninno*

Curator's Corner - Curator / Caretaker Frank T. Meninno

We are all aware of Easton's rich history. But we are also rich in resources as well! A case in point is Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical High School. Located at 250 Foundry Street in South Easton, the school offers apprenticeship training in a number of trades. Many of you have come to know the excellent food provided by the Culinary students for our popular "Chowder and Chatter" evenings which the continued generosity of Lee and Kevin Williams makes possible.

Recently we were able to use the expertise of students in the Cabinetmaking program. In another article in this issue, you will read about the restoration of a very rare tip cart that was performed by students under the watchful eye of their expert instructor. Although the photos accompanying the article are helpful, you really must see the cart to fully appreciate the work that was done to make this a truly exciting addition to our collection. We all owe Southeastern a big round of applause for a job well done!

Another great resource is the Easton Community Access Television studio (ECAT). The talented staff at the studio have already recorded hours of "Chowder and Chatter", interviews with veterans, town meetings and other various meetings and celebrations around town. A number of local programs are recorded in the studio at 50 Oliver Street. The local show Easton Dig focuses on a different aspect of Easton for each issue. Thanks to them we are already seeing historic events being preserved for future generations.

To all my friends and fellow historians, I wish you all a safe and festive Christmas and Hanukkah, and best wishes for a great 2012! Hope to see you soon!

A Cowboy Visits Easton

One of the most exciting people ever to visit Easton arrived here seventy years ago. On November 11th, 1941, America's No. 1 cowboy hero and movie star / singer Gene Autry arrived at the Rockery. He was a guest of the Ames family, and the event served as a fundraiser for the Easton Visiting Nurses Association.

A crowd of nearly 3000 children crowded Main Street and the old bandstand at the Rockery to get a glimpse of Mr. Autry. Many of the children were from out of town, making the trip by bicycle. Autry was driven by auto down Route 138 to Main Street, where a group of mounted horseback riders dressed as cowboys and cowgirls escorted the famed singer to the Rockery.

Edgar W. Baldwin, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, presented Autry with a souvenir Ames shovel. Autry said it was the first trophy for his new home, his previous home being destroyed by fire just days before. Autry then performed his signature hit "Sunshine" to the delight of young and old before leaving the Rockery. The famous cowboy was taken to Langwater farm for a cold glass of milk from the famous Langwater Guernsey cattle there. Later, Mrs. John S. Ames, Jr., who was chair of the Nursing Association, entertained Autry at Spring Hill. Here he sipped tea while chatting with many of the town officers, members of the Ames family and other important people in town.

Souvenirs were sold to raise money for the Easton Visiting Nurses Association. Harry J. Sundell allowed the use of his yard for selling them, and boxes made by sixth grade students, under the supervision of Miss Mary V. Harvey, were used to collect the proceeds. Many of the young girls were taking snapshots of their idol along the route. Chief Berglund must have had his hands full trying to keep the crowd under control, which he and his officers did a fine job of. The horses were arranged by Dorothy Hatchfield, and sound equipment was provided by the McMenemy twins, James and John. Gilbert C. Mann closed the schools early to allow the children to attend. Other area superintendents followed suit, as once area children got wind that Gene Autry would make an appearance in Easton, there wasn't much hope of good attendance anyway!



Announcing our New 2011 Holiday Ornament “Unity Close”

Home of Oliver Ames, Jr.

The Easton Historical Society is pleased to announce our ninth annual glass holiday ornament: “Unity Close” at Christmas as photographed by John Ventresco. John is an award winning photographer who operates Starlight Studio in South Easton. “Unity Close” was built in 1862 for Oliver Ames, Jr. It was later the home of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Parker. The house, which has been lovingly restored by the current owners, is a true Easton landmark, and is an integral part of the history of the Ames family and the North Easton Village National Historic District. The ornament depicts the house with candle lit windows, a heartwarming, familiar sight each winter in Easton.

You can reserve your ornament(s) by calling Hazel Varella at 508-238-3614. As in the past, the ornaments are \$10 each or 4 for \$36. Your order can be picked up during our annual December holiday open houses or any other time during the month.

On Sunday, December 4th, award-winning photographer John Ventresco will sign your ornament. He will be at the Society between 2-4 p.m. Thank you, John, for allowing the use of your wonderful photograph of “Unity Close”!

2012 NATIONAL HISTORY DAY OPEN HOUSE

The Easton Historical Society, in partnership with the Easton Middle School, is pleased to announce our annual National History Day Open House. This year’s event will be held on Sunday, January 29th from noon-5 p.m. at the Society. The theme for this years event is **Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History**. The theme is chosen to “allow students to push past the antiquated view of history as mere facts and dates and drill down into historical content to develop perspective and understanding.”

Our eighth grade students take part in the National History Day school competition in December. Those students chosen to compete at the district level will have their projects on display during this open house. Students may present projects as displays, papers, videos, PowerPoint presentations or live action performances. Easton students have advanced to the national competition in each of the past several years. Please join the students for the afternoon and see the excellent work they produce. They are the next generation of historians, and we have a duty to encourage them!

In Memorium

Etta Berniece Andrews, a resident of Randall Street for many decades, was a devoted member of the Historical Society. Her husband, Robert D. Andrews, Sr. and she had a large poultry farming operation there from the 1930's to the early 1960's. Mrs. Andrews thoroughly enjoyed all the Society's annual "Chowder and Chatters" with her friend Joan Hayward until she moved to Spartanburg, South Carolina to be with her daughter Donna and her husband Steven Anderson. Our deepest sympathy to her sons Robert D., Jr., Thomas and daughter Donna and their families.

Judy Luke, an extraordinarily talented lady, was an Easton native born to Coyle and Sybil Jackman. Her father was captain of the first OAHS football team in 1926. A graduate of Oliver Ames High School in 1955, she performed her excellent secretarial skills in the business world until her marriage to her high school sweetheart, Jack Luke.

Her nurturing skills were definitely evident in the lives of their six children. Another talent was her interest and skill in a variety of crafts such as weaving and painting, and her table at the annual NRT Harvest Fair was one of the most popular for years.

For decades she was an "emergency" typist who always fulfilled the Historical Society's needs. Throughout 1972 she was one of the faithful members weekly at "Borderland" copying the diaries of Oakes Ames. She was the Society's refreshment chairman for several years. Also, she was one of four people who prepared the index for the second volume of The History of Easton.

Since 1997 she was a faithful member of the Society's Research Committee. In 2004, when a new draft of the Blue Map had to be prepared for the printer, Judy accomplished the task in twenty-four hours. During 2008 she typed the thirty-eight pages of A Glimpse of the Past - The Easton Historical Society 1948-2008.

Our deepest sympathy to her husband Jack and her six children John, Mike, David, Melinda, Steven and Deborah who was our dynamic past president.

Ken Martin, a longtime member of the Society, was in a serious accident on November 3rd. Ken has been running our bottle and can drives for 24 years, as well as performing yard work and helping at open houses. He is a frequent visitor as well. The Society expresses our best wishes for a swift and complete recovery.

Dr. James Kenneally gave a most interesting talk on the 1889 strike by the handle shop workers at the Ames Shovel Company on November 3rd. The talk was well attended. Thank you, Dr. Kenneally, for your great work and research on this topic! Thanks to the North Easton Savings Bank for hosting our meeting and providing refreshments!

One of the missing components of the talk was the lack of documentation from any of the workers. As a result, we never found out who really "won" the strike. We are asking our members to look over letters, diaries or scrapbooks that may be in the family and may shed some further light on this subject.

While we are on that subject, we encourage you to keep us in mind when you are going through your old family papers. Often these items are thrown out because no one thinks they contain anything of interest. Many times they offer insight into daily life that we aren't aware of, or expand our knowledge of a period in time. So please keep us in mind before your old letters and snapshots hit the trash bin!

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Large framed photographs of John S. Ames, Jr.—one of him on horseback jumping a stone wall at Myopia, and the other of Governor Bradford and the Governor’s Council 1947-48, from his son Charlton Ames; a trunk sent from “Spring Hill” to the family plantation in South Carolina, from Charlton Ames and his sister Mary Ames; David Carr’s 1935 OAHs diploma and the 1935 graduation issue of the Eastoner from his daughter Diane Carr; a plank from a shipping crate marked “Ross Heel Company” from Roger “Pete” McNamara; memorabilia from the Society’s 60th Anniversary Gala from Nancy Cohenno; Mrs. Mainwaring’s Journal, 1877, with a bookplate for the U.S.S. Library North Easton, from Mrs. David Ames, Sr.; Jaycee items and a 1940 Memorial Day program from Lee Williams; Cornelius Dailey deed dated 1916 and a Paul Collins deed dated 1878 from Frank and Jeanette Meninno; photos of grammar school students from around 1937 from Gloria Freitas-Steidinger; 2 boxes of town reports and other town related reports from Burt Lewis; 2 pairs of antique women’s button up boots, wooden Simpson Spring case, Simpson Spring bottle opener, shoe lasts, and a device for measuring shoe sizes from the Sheehan family; an antique button hook from Melanie Deware; OAHs 1998 prom mug, Simpson Spring bottles, 1996-97 Easton School Directory, OAHs graduation programs, 2 Olmsted School aprons, 1976-77 Sr. and Jr. Prom glasses, photos of Easton teachers, Mass. Highway Report for 1934, laminated pager from the Enterprise, 1960’s, Game of Easton, from Russ Meninno; Lowell Textile School 1951 yearbook featuring Wayne Legge, Women’s Club of Brockton playbook dated 1919, ice scraping tool, souvenir book from the Mohawk Trail, Forefathers Monument (Plymouth, MA) paperweight, Time Magazine dated September 2001, iron hair curler, paperweight containing a piece of the Apollo spacecraft Columbia / Eagle from Wayne Legge; OAHs diploma awarded to Winnifred Smith in 1903, photo of North Easton Grammar School, perfect attendance slips awarded to Winnifred Smith in the 1890’s, Centre School Graduation Program for 1899, OAHs Graduation Invitation for 1903 from Celeste Dahlborg; OAHs Class of 1948 reunion photos, Class Day photo, 1948 football game photo, 1946 athletic programs, 1948 Class Photo, photo of class play “Dear Ruth”, 1948 prom photo, 1948 photo of a men’s quartet featuring Charles McCarthy, Jr. from Alice McCarthy; Oakes Ames Memorial Hall and old Colony Railroad Station miniatures from the estate of Maybelle Cedarholm, from Marilyn Henderson; OAHs baseball letter and award certificate 1940’s from F. William Schultz; a stereo card of the 1886 freshet at South Street from Melanie Deware; Class of 1953 materials and yearbooks from Lee Williams; photo of the Bullfinch Statehouse commemorating its bicentennial in 1998 from Priscilla Almquist-Olsen, Esq.; genealogy and local history books and newspapers from the family of the late Joseph and Audrey Bolster; a girls junior high gym uniform, from Anne-Marie Meninno; a former “hot topic” item, from Suzanne Rivard; 1961 OAHs cheerleading jacket and athletic pass, from Anne Marie Martin; Mitrano Chevrolet yard stick, from Don Tuck; Reed Family genealogy, from Leon Lombardi; Morse scrapbook from the late 1800’s, from John Kent; floral cloth bag with a Red Cross ID sewn in; a delicately embroidered wheat sheath, from Priscilla Almquist-Olsen, Esq.

We have also received financial donations from David Ames, Jr., Claire C. Colwell, Robert Keller, Michelle Pierce, Cynthia Van Swearingen, Mary Rose Garfagna and Catherine Harvey, Dr. and Mrs. Robert F. Misiewicz, Judy King, Phyllis Johnson Whitty and Janet Peterson White.

Financial donations in memory of Judy Luke has been received from Mr. and Mrs. M. David Varella and Mr. and Mrs. Edwin C. White.

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

This 'n' That

Our continued appreciation to the King family for the Robert D. and Sally G. King Fund which enables the Society do so many special activities.

Mary Bodio has moved to Bay Path Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, 308 Kingstown Way, Duxbury, MA 02332. Her room number is 109. Anyone wishing to send cards should send them to this address.

Paul DeCouto lent us several very special items for our recent open house on the 1964-65 O. A. football team including newspaper clippings and jackets as well as a great video of some of the games the team played. We hope to repeat the program on September 9th, 2012. Thank you, Paul.

Thanks also to Anne Marie Martin for her cheerleading jacket and athletic pass.

Anyone having interior pictures of the Paul Dean Lodge on Williams Street is asked to contact Curator Frank Meninno. Past Master Gerald B. Nordling is compiling an informative history of the Paul Dean Lodge furniture.

Thank you to all who donated to our annual yard sale: John and Marie Graca, Wayne Legge, Janice and William Lyttle, The Pare family, Helen and Leo Harlow, Pat Baker and her book reading group, David Ames, Jr., Heidi Ames, Leon Lombardi and Judy King.

Save April 12th for our annual "Chowder and Chatter" night at Southeastern Regional with appreciation to Lee and Kevin Williams.

Thank you to Jean Visnauskis for donating archival supplies.

On September 24th more than 100 people enjoyed the reenactment of "Life in Easton Years Ago" which had been presented on September 27th, 1951. Written by Amory Parker and Ruth Smith, this performance was enjoyed by Mr. Parker's children Oliver, William, and Frances, and Ruth Smith's son MacKenzie. Her daughter Cynthia was unable to attend. Each of these sons and daughters was presented with a special pen to honor the occasion. Also honored were two participants from the original presentation: Mrs. David Ames and Alfred G. Morse. Performers in the 2011 production were Edmund Hands, Colleen Corona, Melanie Deware, Leon Lombardi, William Ames, Alfred G. Morse, Edwin White, Lyn White, James Thomas, Frederick Ames, Candice Sheehan, Mrs. David Ames, Mrs. Oliver F. Ames, Charleton Ames, Frances DeLacvivier and MacKenzie Smith. Extras on stage were played by Richard Hill and Frank Meninno. Also assisting were: Patricia Baker and Emma Varella for leading the sing-alongs, the Refreshment Committee chaired by Joan Lundgren and assisted by Priscilla Almquist-Olsen, Sarah Keough and Wayne Lundgren, and at the door tickets salesperson Nancy DeLuca. Thanks to Frederick Ames for the use of the Oakes Ames Memorial Hall. This was an Ames Free Library-Easton's Public Library, Easton Historical Society, and Oakes Ames Memorial Hall presentation.

Congratulations to Anna Lee Ames Frohlich for her book The Lonely Pyramid on Sherman Hill winning third place in the Westerners International 2010 Philip A. Danielson Award Competition. The award was presented October 18th in Oakland, California at the Western History Association Meeting. Her presentation in August 2010 to the Historical Society was informative and enjoyable.

Wayne Hill, whose article on "Sheep Pasture" appeared in the fall newsletter, had a letter published in the opinion page of The New York Times Sunday, October 9th. A graduate of Oliver Ames High School in 1963, he now lives in the Philippines.

You probably read or heard about the recently found Abigail Adams letter in Yarmouth Port which has been given to the Massachusetts Historical Society. The letter written March 2nd, 1788 by Abigail when she was in London contained her opinions on European politics and sharp commentary on a still-young America. But did you know that the finder of the letter, Judge Lawrence Perera, showed it to his close friend Duncan Oliver, author and former President of the Easton Historical Society, and asked him where would be the best place to put it? Thanks to Norma Jean Hanscom for the information from the June 16th, 2011 Cape Cod Times.

What a find!

It may not be Santa's sleigh, but this tip cart may be just as rare! One summer day in 2009, member Burt Lewis called the Society to announce he had procured an old "flower cart" for us. It turns out that Burt had stopped at a yard sale at the home of the late Martyn Lincoln on Lincoln Street. While speaking with James Lincoln, Marty's son, it was discovered that there was an old Ames cart under the barn in an area once used to butcher animals. Jim, Burt, and Frank Meninno, with the assistance of sons Dominic and Anthony, pulled the cart out from underneath the barn. It was indeed an Ames Implement and Farm Company tip cart, circa 1900. Although the cart was intact, it suffered from dry rot and powder post beetle damage. The old Ames Plow Company wheels were loose and quite rickety. The cart was brought to the Society, and later transferred to a shed for safe keeping over the winter. The following spring Frank (Southeastern Class of 1977) contacted Southeastern Regional High School to see if they could take on a restoration project. Joseph Markt, the Cabinetmaking shop instructor and also a member of the same graduating class, agreed to take on the project. Over the next 18 months students meticulously disassembled the cart, replaced the floor and sides, tightened the wheel spokes and reassembled the cart. They were very careful not to change the original red and green paint coloring. They also left the lettering intact which is still readable. The result was a terrific restoration which saved this beautiful relic from days gone by.

The Society thanks the family of the late Martyn Lincoln and his son Jim in particular for this generous donation. We also thank Burt for discovering this and making the donation possible. Special thanks are extended to Southeastern Regional High School, instructor Joseph Markt, and student Josh Alger of Brockton whose incredible talent and energy saved this wonderful cart from a much less glorious future! Thanks to Burt for the "as found" photos as well!



The cart as we found it...



...and after restoration was completed!



Detail on Ames Tip Cart

The stenciled lettering on an old Ames tip cart says “Ames Implement and Seed Co. Boston, Mass.” The cart, which has been restored (story inside), was made around 1900. This company, which made farming equipment for the residential market, superseded the former Ames Plow Company which produced commercial equipment for farmers and wholesale food producers.

Address changing? Please tell us!

Address Service Requested

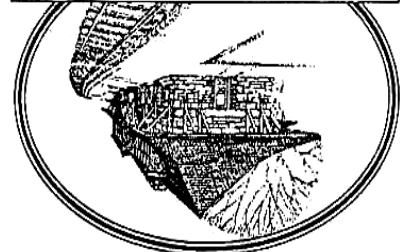
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