EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Fall 2025 **Volume 26 Issue 3**

"Autumn leaves don't fall, they fly. They take their time and wander on this their only chance to soar." Delia Owens, Where the Crawdads Sing

As summer flies into autumn we look forward to the weather changing, the sun setting earlier, leading to darker days. The first frost arrives, apples ripen, pumpkins grow large. On October 6th the Hunter's Moon will claim the night sky, this is the time people in the northern hemisphere traditionally prepared for the winter months– hunting, slaughtering, and preserving. November's moon is called the Beaver Moon as this is the time the beavers build their winter homes. This autumn has much in store as the Easton 300 celebration continues. The Easton300 Antique Car Show on October 11th at Borderland, Easton300 Bonfire Columbus Day Weekend at Oliver Ames High School, and the Easton300 Anniversary Gala to look forward to on December 27th at Stonehill College.

A very special Open House is coming Sunday, September 21st. Who remembers getting candy for special occasions at Hilliard's candy store? The big display box of chocolates on the porch? And more recently ice cream? Take a look inside for more about our upcoming event!

CALENDAR

Sunday, September 21, Open House, 12:30-4, History of Hilliard's Chocolates

Learn about the history of Hilliards Chocolates, one of New England's most beloved artisan brands.

Saturday, September 27, 10-12, Walk the Path, NRT

Easton historian Ed Hands will lead a reflective and immersive experience walking The Path—the trail made famous by Stonehill professor, scientist, naturalist, and writer Chet Raymo in his beloved book The Path: A One-Mile Walk Through the Universe.

Sunday, October 3, 10-2, Annual NRT Harvest Fair at Sheep Pasture

A fun-filled day with family-themed activities, crafters, live music, a silent auction, and specialty foods! This is NRT's biggest event of the year!

Saturday, October 11, Easton300 Antique Car Show at Borderland State Park, 9-2

PRIZES – MUSIC – FOOD – FUN – ENJOYMENT. Hosted by Friends of Borderland and DCR (Dept of Conservation & Recreation).

Saturday, October 18, "Spooky" Cemetery Car Tour, 2pm

A drive along visit to several of Easton's "haunted" cemeteries led by local historian Ed Hands. Meet at the parking lot of the Easton Historical Society & Museum.

Sunday, October 19, Easton Historical Society and Museum Open House, 12:30-4

Sunday, October 26, Easton Food Pantry Halloween Parade, 4pm

Begins at Frothingham Hall, 15 Barrows Street.

Sunday, November 16, Easton Historical Society and Museum Open House, 12:30-4

Honoring Our Veterans

The mission of the Easton Historical Society and Museum is to preserve, promote and interpret the unique industrial, social, cultural, architectural and environmental history of the Town.

Museum News

The EHSM contribution to the 300th parade was a great success with a full trolley decked out with signage and including a number of the 1952 Lions Little League Team members. Member Ron Wood kept the group entertained with his musical selections. On August 13th a tour was conducted for an assisted living group from Attleboro. Easton Night at Brockton Rox was a fun time as this Easton300 event was enjoyed by many Easton fans and the Rox won! At the King Family Annual Membership Cookout on August 17th Nancy and Jack DeLuca once again manned the grill offering delicious hot dogs and hamburgers. The enjoyable afternoon was much appreciated by the King family. Jon Coe hosted a Book Tour group from Foxboro on August 19th. The group had read a book on HH Richardson and the tour went well. On September 4, the Sippican Historical Society visited us and Ken gave the group a tour of the station and they went on to Langwater.

It was lovely to see retired school librarian, EHSM member, and Friend of the Library, Barbara Beech at the Members's Cookout!

September 6th was the Easton300 Block Party, sponsored by Doug King. Upcoming events include the dedication of a Shovel Company marker at the "Island" on Pond Street. This is part of the Trustees of Reservations property. The dedication will take place on Saturday, September 20th at 10 am. On Sunday, September 21st our Open House will feature Judy Hilliard McCarthy as guest speaker, sharing the history of "Hilliard's Chocolates". Hilliard's celebrated its 100th year in 2024 and is a beloved local business.

There will be an Open House on Sunday, October 19th.

The renovation of the basement is complete. All debris was removed, cement poured, LED lighting with outlets installed in and a commercial dehumidifier installed. Five new metal storage racks and 1 new baker's rack have been delivered. Again, thank you to member Bob Silva for his generous financial support of this project.

Newly displayed items at the station include a framed photo of the interior image of the Unity Church, a framed Civil War letter with an actual postal envelope gifted by Gene Blood, and a replica Native American Indian bust of Obbatinewat, originally sculpted by Adelbert Ames Jr. in 1912.

Volunteers are still needed in order to maximize our open hours, especially afternoons and weekends. We welcome Bonnie Porter-Meglio to our impressive group of current volunteers. As far as landscaping is concerned, Modern Landscaping has been hired to cut back, trim, weed, clean up the beds, mulch, and remove debris. The station is already looking better. **Remember to renew your membership if it is time!** If you want to become a member or renew your membership go to our website and click on the MEMBERSHIP menu. It is easy to navigate and join/renew online. www.eastonmahistoricalsociety.org You can also pay be check if you prefer. Mail to P,O. Box 3, 80 Mechanic Street, North Easton, MA 02356. If you are not sure of your membership status please contact us. Memberships can also be renewed this way. Our membership rates have changed slightly. We have Student (free), Individual ($20), Family ($30), Senior ($10), Sustainer ($250), Lifetime ($500), and Corporate ($200) memberships available. Check out the new website and update your membership if it's time! eastonmahsmuseum@gmail.com

The Easton Historical Society Newsletter
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Seeking Your Memories of Hazel Varella!

Since the Easton Historical Society & Museum (EHSM) was reactivated in the 1960s, Hazel Varella was one of its cornerstones, right up until her passing last March at age 92. Writing books, editing Reminiscences, teaching people about Easton, and much more, Hazel did a lot to share the history of her beloved town. She was also heavily active in other institutions like Oliver Ames High School, where she taught for decades.

Hazel's influence reached far, touched many lives, and inspired fond memories. Do you have any you'd like to share? Maybe you were one of her colleagues or OA students, or met her through EHSM. You're welcome to post memories here or email RemEHSM11@gmail.com. Your submissions may appear in memorials in books like the next volume of Reminiscences. Thankyou!

There will never be another Hazel, but memories of her live on!

Hilliard's is a family owned business in its fourth generation. Founded in 1924 by Perly and Jessie Hilliard, son Alan and his wife Barbara brought the enterprise to Easton in 1950 when they purchased the white Victorian on the corner of Washington and Main. Hilliard's chocolates have always been created by hand with the finest ingredients. The store passed to Judy (Hilliard) McCarthy and her husband Charlie and today is run by their children Maegan and Erin. Hilliard's Chocolates continues to be a destination location. Favorites include "Popular Assortment" (always a great gift), fudge, almond toffee crunch, truffles, caramel apples, fresh roasted nuts and more. Summer brings in excited adults and children eager to sample the small batch hand-crafted ice cream. Come to our Open House on Sunday, September 21st and meet Judy Hilliard McCarthy and her daughter Erin!

Hilliard's chocolate bars are very popular and delicious and have helped many local organizations with fundraising. Today Hilliard's has 3 locations, Mansfield, Norwell, and North Easton.

FALL IS HURRICANE SEASON

A Look Back at Past Hurricanes

· When Hurricane Erin recently passed by, it's effects were mostly benign, but hurricane season has cyclically been hard on the east coast. The historic "Great Hurricane of 1938" left immense damage to eastern New England and that included Easton. Overall the storm caused over $41 billion in property damage and was responsible for the death of over 700 people of all ages. Storm surges in Massachusetts were measured at 18 to 25 feet and the greatest wave height was measured at Gloucester at 50 feet. The maximum recorded sustained wind was at Blue Hill Observatory—121 miles per hour. The maximum recorded wind gust was 186 miles per hour– also at Blue Hill. Some people living through that storm felt like it was the end of the world.

The storm first hit Long Island on September 20th. When finished, all told, approximately 8,900 homes were destroyed, approximately 3,300 boats were destroyed, and approximately 2 billion trees. The storm was a Category 5 and the US Weather Bureau failed to adequately warn about the storm, believing it would pass out to sea as was more typical. The Standard-Times newspaper only reported (too late) that a "gale" was on the way. Unfortunately in many areas it had been raining so much previously that the ground could not absorb more water and the storm coincided with the autumn equinox so astronomically high tides were due.

In cities like Fall River (as well as many other places) there was no electricity so schools closed, phones and radios were out, and many businesses were forced to close, leaving people without work. Coastal communities like New Bedford lost so many boats that the fishing industry was seriously undermined. Two-thirds of the boats in New Bedford sunk.

Photos of the 1938 hurricane were taken by folks in Easton and some of those are shared on the following page. Who took them, or exact locations are not known– at least to me.

Historically there have been several bad hurricanes in New England. In 1635 a storm hit the New England colonies. Governors John Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay Colony and William Bradford of Plymouth Colony described storm surges, high winds, and great destruction. Houses were downed, thousands of trees toppled, and 17 "Indians" (Natives) drowned. The Great September Gale of 1815, likely a Category 3 or 4, was devastating– only to be followed by 1816, "The Year Without A Summer". In the 1815 storm, "Nine-year-old John Peabody was standing near the edge of the mill pond in Boxford, Mass., when a gust of wind picked him up, carried him 30 feet and dunked him in the water. His family rescued him." (https://newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/the-great-september-gale-of-1815/) The Year Without A Summer was caused by the eruption of Mt Tambora in Indonesia which caused global temperatures to fall leading to crop failure and famine. Only 6 years later in September of 1944 Southeastern Massachusetts was again battered a 100-mile-an-hour hurricane but this time adequate warning was given and residents took the warnings seriously, especially on Cape Cod and in coastal areas and homeowners left their homes prior to the storm hitting. Thirty-one deaths were reported but this was less than the hundreds reported in the 1938 storm. Unlike the 1938 storm, high tide preceded the arrival of the storm by 3 hours. Nevertheless, houses were washed away, trees toppled, and boats wrecked. Utilities were hard hit. Areas bearing the brunt of the storm were New Bedford, Fairhaven, Fall River, Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod.

Other fierce hurricanes to hit New England include, Hurricane Carol (1954), Gloria (1985), Bob (1991), and Sandy (2012). Hopefully the September of 2025 will be a quiet one.

HURRICANE OF 1938 EASTON MA

The photos were scanned from negatives and taken on 9/22/1938.

EASTON300 BLOCK PARTY, 2025

On Saturday, September 7th, the Easton300 Block Party, organized by the Easton Tricentennial Committee and sponsored by Doug A. King, Builders, Inc., was held at the Governor Ames Estate. Throngs of people of all ages turned out to celebrate their community. The day was warm and steamy with sunshine overhead. While food trucks crowded the parking lot, vendors and representatives of local businesses and organizations were spread out across the gently rolling lawns. Under the Pavilion, musicians entertained the crowds. There were many family friendly activities including bounce houses, face-painting, and lawn games. Employees of the Shoveltown Brewery Beer Garden were kept busy. A highlight was the unveiling of Easton's 275th time capsule. The time capsule arrived with much fanfare from safekeeping at the Bank of Easton. David Clifton and Dale Kerester, Chair and Vice Chair of the Tricentennial Committee, introduced Town Historian Ed Hands and Select Board Vice Chair Craig Barger, who both offered remarks. Ken Michel, President of the Easton Historical Society and Museum, oversaw the opening of the box (time capsule). Children were more than happy to help unearth items such as a cannonball, a History of Easton, and other artifacts from 1975. The event was well-planned with more than a nod to Easton's history and certainly achieved the committee's goal of commemorating Easton's heritage and facilitating greater knowledge and appreciation of our history and our future.

Above: A giant shovel represents the importance of Easton's industrial past in the shaping of our town. Right: A young girl helping with the time capsule, Dale Kerester & David Clifton in colonial dress, Ed Hands (behind), and Ken Michel. Many volunteers worked hard to put this event together and they did an amazing job. Forty-eight hours later there was no evidence the event had occurred. The grounds were spotless. Clowns, axe throwers, corn hole players, and balloons were nowhere to be seen. Well done!

Donations

We have received the donation of a replica bust of Obbatinewat, Shamut Sachem, (circa 1610-1630), The original was a bronze bust created by Adelbert Ames.in 1912. The bust was donated by Virginia L. Fresina and family in honor of Francis Robert Fresina. Gene Blood has donated a framed Civil War letter with the postal envelope. A significant monetary donation was made by Paul Berry. Financial donations were made by Maura McCarthy, Nancy Cohenno, Richard Guy Wilson, Leslie Gray, Hunter Moorman, Kenneth Michel, Charlton Ames, James Carlino, Stephen Gay, Leslie Mullen, Kevin and Hala Williams, Ann Ritz, Joyce Isiminger, David Ames, Frederick Ames, Nancy Ames, Ian Dunbar, Joanne England, Jack Gill, Larry Hurley, Stephen Anderson.

IN MEMORIAM

Oliver, Duncan Boyd Passed away, at age 87, on June 10, leaving behind a legacy of love, education and history. A Bowdoin graduate and Army veteran, he devoted 34 years to Easton Public Schools, serving as principal at Oliver Ames High School for 21 years. His passion for history led to extensive work with local historical societies and numerous published writings. In retirement, he traveled widely with his wife, Carol, and spent time with his cherished grandsons. He is survived by his beloved wife, Carol Geissler; his daughter, Kim Juric and her husband, Gordon of Cataumet, MA; his daughter, Jen Oliver and her husband, Sean Stuart of Monument Beach, MA; his grandsons, Cameron Juric and his fiancée, Abby Moore of Burlington, MA; and Grant Juric and his significant other, Shannon Glynn of Chicago, IL.

Richard E. McCarthy, 81, of West Bridgewater, passed away on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at the West Roxbury Veterans Medical Center. He was the husband of Carol Ann (Elliot) McCarthy. Born in Quincy, Richard was the son of the late Charles and Evelyn (Locke) McCarthy. He grew up in Easton and went on to graduate from Stonehill College. Richard was a veteran of the United States Army during the Vietnam era. Richard enjoyed a long career with Verizon and cherished time spent with family and friends. Richard will be missed by his wife, Carol Ann; his children, Heidi Louttit and her husband Steve, Holly Cambra, Patrick McCarthy, Heather Mendonca, Christine Holmes and her husband Donald, Robert Josselyn, and Hope McCarthy; his grandchildren, Ken, Meagan, Brian, Emanuel, Amanda, Shannon, Kerryn, Devyn, Connor, Nicole, Lauren, Christian, and Jennaya; and his great-grandchildren, Cole and Autumn. He is also survived by his siblings, Marylou Boyd, Janice Coe, Gina McCarthy, and Paula Coe, as well as many nieces and nephews. He was also the brother of the late Kevin McCarthy, Paul McCarthy, James McCarthy and Charles McCarthy. Richard was the brother-in-law of Easton Historical Society and Museum Vice President Jonathan Coe.

Mary "Heidi" Ames of Chestnut Hill, MA, passed away June 3, 2025. Heidi was born in Boston on March 17, 1939, and raised in North Easton, MA. She was the daughter of John Stanley Ames Jr. and Isabel Biddle Henry of Philadelphia. She attended Milton Academy in Milton, MA, Montesano in Gstaad, Switzerland, Foxcroft School in Middleburg, VA, and Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA. Throughout her adult life, she resided in the United States, Mexico and the United Kingdom. Heidi dedicated much of her life to supporting animal welfare. Heidi committed much of her life to volunteering for charitable organizations, including The Fragment Society, Gore Place, Martin House Farm, The Chickering Foundation, and the Franklin Park Zoo. Predeceased by her brother, John, Heidi is survived by her siblings, Charlton of Rockport, ME, and Isabel of St. Petersburg, FL; her children, Jean of St. Petersburg, FL, Maria of Hilton Head, SC, and Richard of Newton, MA; and her six grandchildren, Justin, Julian, Amanda, Samantha, Ethan, and Lilah.

Francis (Frank) J. Boyd, 93, of West Bridgewater passed away Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at his home. He was the husband of Marylou (McCarthy, Cogswell) Boyd. Frank was born to Francis J. Boyd and Bernice (Randall) Boyd in 1932. He was a lifelong resident of West Bridgewater, where he attended high school before leaving to join the U.S. Army. Frank served in the United States Army during the Korean War and, upon discharge, served in the Army National Guard for six years. He spent his career working for Teamsters Local 653. He served on the Town of West Bridgewater Board of Registrars since 1962, was a member of the Democratic Town Committee, and was a Past Commander of the American Legion Post 91. He was a committed member of St. Anne's Church. Frank is survived by his wife, Marylou, and his devoted children Michael Cogswell and wife Yvonne Stace, Deborah Holland and husband John, and Kristin McCafferty and husband Paul, along with many grandchildren.

Francis David "Fran" Garcea, 82, of Brockton, Massachusetts, passed away on Tuesday, September 2, 2025. Born in Brockton, he was the son of the late Mary (DiMarzo) Garcea and Augustino "Gus" Garcea, and brother of the late Marie (Garcea) Legault. Fran dedicated his life to education, serving as a beloved English teacher at Brockton High School, Easton's Oliver Ames High School, and Boston College High School. His passion for teaching extended beyond the classroom as the founder of Jon L. Jenmarc Inc., where he helped transform the landscape of higher education in Massachusetts, impacting the professional growth of thousands of teachers. Beyond his professional achievements, Fran will be remembered for his humor, wisdom, and devotion to his family. He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Lisa (Lupica) Garcea; daughter Jenny (Garcea) Moores and her husband Ken; sons Marc Garcea and his wife Stephanie (Halkett) Garcea, Jon Garcea and his fiancée Emily Weldon, and David Garcea. He was the proud grandfather of Rhiannon Hicks, Cathleen Moores, Beckett Moores, and Jackson Garcea, who brought him great joy.

Alice B. (Kent) McCarthy, age 95, of North Easton, September 6, 2025. She was the wife of the late Charles F. "Charlie" McCarthy, Jr. for 57 years. Alice was a lifelong resident of North Easton, a graduate of Oliver Ames High School, and The Children's Hospital, Boston, School of Nursing. Over the years she worked as a Visiting Nurse helping those in need. Alice was active in her community her entire life. She was very involved in the preservation of Wheaton Farm, Sheep Pasture, Borderland State Park, Ames Free Library, and Oakes Ames Memorial Hall. She was on the Board and a member of the Natural Resources Trust of Easton and Easton Conservation Commission. She was a member of the Easton Historical Society, Easton Garden Club, Brockton Ski Club, and Beverly Yacht Club of Marion. She received numerous accolades and awards for her contributions to conservation, land and historical preservation in Easton. She was also a lifelong communicant of the Immaculate Conception Church. Alice is survived by her children, Maura J. McCarthy and her fiancé Troy H. Kaichen of Lebanon, ME, Charles F. "Chuck" McCarthy, III of Hingham, Timothy C. McCarthy and his wife Denise Daley of North Easton, and Margaret M. "Meg" Deegan and her husband Greg of St. Croix, VI; seven grandchildren, Shauna Howell and her husband Jeffrey, Charles F. "Chuckie" McCarthy, IV, Sean McCarthy and his fiancée McKenzie Krawczyk, Daniel McCarthy, Ryan McCarthy and his fiancée Lila Crowley, P. Michael Crowley, and Kevin T. Crowley; great-granddaughter Johanna Howell; and many nieces and nephews.

The Hurricane of 1938 hit the east coast hard and Easton was not spared. With high winds and excessive rain falling on already water-logged ground, flooding was overwhelming, particularly in coastal areas. Forecasters believed the hurricane would move out to sea so gave little warning. In the photo at left, an Easton homeowner clears up the mess left by the Great Hurricane of 1938. Hurricanes were not assigned female names until 1953. The storm landed on Long Island and quickly moved north.

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