



EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Spring 2024

Volume 25, Issue 1

“Something there is that doesn't love a wall”

I love the quote from the Robert Frost poem, *Mending Wall*. Stone walls are ubiquitous to New England and Easton certainly has its share. Stone walls, whether deep in the woods, strung out over green fields, hugging the side of the road, or marking the remains of old homesites, have long captured people's imaginations. Here in New England, rich in colonial history, they are a symbol of our agricultural past, are beautiful to look at, and in some people, initiate nostalgia for a more bucolic past. When I was younger I used to marvel at wherever I walked in the woods, there were always stone walls. Easton, like many colonial era towns, was settled by individuals who acquired land and created the necessities of settlement. There were a few people living in Easton prior to 1696 and others, as recorded by the Taunton North Purchase, began coming in 1696. Early industries in Easton included saw-mills, grist-mills, and forges. Many had part interest in these businesses, and many were yeoman farmers. Most settlers established farms or depended heavily on farms for basic needs.

“It amazes me that wherever I walk in the woods in New England there are stone walls. In the middle of the woods, far from any house. It is a specifically New England phenomenon, the result of settlement and economic patterns.” This is a quote from Robert M. Thorson, author of the book *Stone by Stone*, a wonderful history of New England's stone walls. Easton has many stone walls along roadsides, in backyards, deep in the woods. It is a great read.

The earliest New England farmers met with tillable soil. After the forests were clear-cut for farming, building, and fuel the ground became colder in the winter and frost heaves forced the formerly buried stone, deposited during the last ice age, to the surface. Farmers needed to clear their land and placed stones along the edges of their pastures or fields. They were a waste product. Some might say a beautiful waste product.

CALENDAR

Sunday, March 24, Open House, 12-4, Short film, “Return to Monte's Pond.” The museum's full collection of ice harvesting tools will be on display.

Sunday, March 31, Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 7, World Health Day

Sunday, April 14, Open House, 12-4

Monday, April 15, Patriot's Day

Monday, April 22, First Day of Passover

Monday, April 22, Earth Day

Friday, April 26, Arbor Day

Sunday, May 5, Orthodox Easter

Sunday, May 12, Mother's Day

Monday, May 27, Memorial Day

Saturday, June 1, Graduation Day, Oliver Ames HS

Sunday, June 16, Father's Day

Wednesday, June 19, Juneteenth

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.

The Museum is Open Saturdays

Officers, Directors, and volunteer members have all been working together to keep the Railroad Station open on Saturdays 10:00-4:00. This is in addition to regular monthly Open Houses. If the OPEN flag is on display, please stop in.

Exciting projects are happening at the Museum. The parking lot has been newly striped. The kitchen is being updated with an estimated April 1 completion date. New cabinets will be arriving and the kitchen and stairway will be painted. The basement floor will be cemented and dehumidifiers installed. Work has been ongoing as volunteers continue to organize the second floor of the station to put artifacts in their proper place. Thank you to the volunteers who must be hardy souls as the second floor of the station is very cold in the winter. There has been much progress under the direction of 2nd Vice President Jon Coe.

December saw the annual Holiday Open House. On January 21, 2024 the monthly Open House honored Easton resident George Badger Cogswell, The doctor was so loved by Easton residents during his lifetime that schools were closed on the day of his funeral. February's Open House, Feb. 25, 2024, focused on recipes and cookbooks; they dated from 1796 to present day. Corn & oysters anyone? Thank you to Donna Anderson for donating many kitchen artifacts for display and Ginny Murray for providing beautiful aprons belonging to her family. On current display is the image of the Schooner Oliver Ames. The largest of its day (1888), the ship was named in honor of then governor Oliver Ames.

The next Open House is scheduled for March 24, 12:00-4:00 and will include a short film on Monte's Ice House. The museum's full collection of ice harvesting tools will be on display. We hope to see you!

Our website has been updated and improved by Director Steve Anderson. Members now have the ability to word search all of the content contained on the Historical Society website. It is easier to navigate and new members can join online. Existing members can renew their membership. Our membership rates have increased slightly. We have Student (free), Senior (\$10), Individual (\$20), Family (\$30), and Corporate (\$200) memberships available. Also available are ***new Sustainer of EHS&M*** memberships for a \$250 donation and ***new Lifetime*** memberships for a one time donation of \$500 or more. Check out the new website and update your membership if it's time! www.eastonmahistoricalsociety.org

Lastly, beginning with this issue, the Quarterly will be sent digitally to every member with an email on file. If you do not have an email on file but wish to receive the Quarterly by email please go the website and let us know.

The Easton Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly by the Easton Historical Society and Museum.

Officers

President Kenneth J. Michel
1st Vice President David Ames, Jr.
2nd Vice President Jonathan Coe
Treasurer Nancy DeLuca
Recording / Corresponding Secretary Hazel L. Varella

Directors

Joanne England
Judge Leon J. Lombardi
Debra Salisbury
Steve Anderson
Virginia Murray
Timothy Hurley

Educational Liaison—Matthew Auger

Staff Writer—Anne Wooster Drury

JANUARY OPEN HOUSE

George Badger Cogswell, M.D.

George Badger Cogswell, M.D. was many things in his sixty-one years: college student, sailor, wanderer, physician, postmaster, soldier, upstanding citizen of Easton. He was born in Bradford, Massachusetts in 1834. After serving in the Civil War After the war he had a flourishing practice in the Easton area and was personal physician to members of the Ames family.

In 1880 Dr. Cogswell lived at 115 Main Street with his wife and 2 children in a home they called Oakhurst. Cogswell served Easton in many capacities, winning the love and respect of Easton's citizens.



Oakhurst in Cogswell's day.



Oakhurst today.



Map of Cogswell residence, located on Main Street.

Cogswell distinguished himself during his service in the Civil War and won the respect of his fellow soldiers & townsmen.

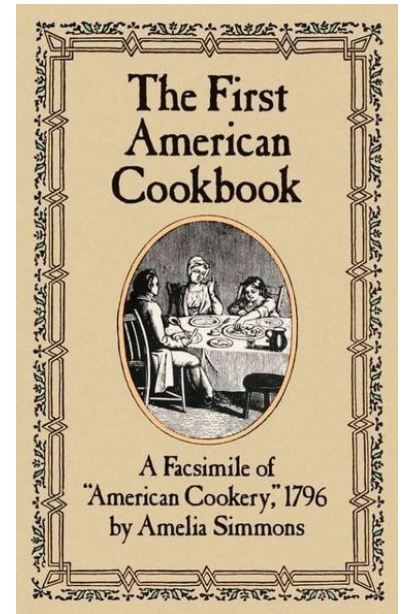
“On December 14, 1861, he was mustered into service in the Civil War as assistant surgeon of the 29th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, and promoted surgeon on August 7, 1862. He was for a time on the staff of general Wilcox as acting medical inspector of the Ninth Army Corps.”

“At the time of the seven days' fighting on the peninsula in 1862, when the federal forces retired, he remained behind and voluntarily yielded himself a prisoner in order that he might care for his wounded comrades, and for three weeks he was confined in Libby prison.”

FEBRUARY OPEN HOUSE

COOKBOOKS & RECIPES

The EHS has a replica of the "First American Cookbook" published in 1796 by Amelia Simmons. Also a copy of the 1896 cookbook, "The Boston Cooking School Cookbook", by Fannie Merritt Farmer, and a cookbook signed by Ruth (Graves) Wakefield who established the Toll House restaurant in Whitman in 1930 along with her husband. Ruth Graves was raised in Easton. The Toll House burned down in 1984. Ruth Wakefield is known for creating the first chocolate chip cookie.



- *Calves Head dressed Turtle Fashion
- *Tongue Pie
- *Soup of Lamb's Head and Pluck
- *Foot Pie
- *Fowl Smothered in Oysters

American Cookery by Amelia Simmons is the first known cookbook written by an American. Previous cookbooks used in the colonies had been British. It was published in Hartford CT. Ingredients available in America were used in the recipes which included Indian pudding, johnnycake, and pumpkin pie. Turkey and cranberry were first paired in this cookbook. Baking powder was introduced as a leavening agent. This cookbook was popular for some time. Recipes included are starred above.*



Family aprons donated for display by Director Ginny Murray.

According to Wikipedia, *American Cookery* is "the first known printed American call for the use of a chemical leavening agent that was the precursor to modern baking powder used to cause dough to rise in baking. At that time, it was known as potash, pearl ash, pearlash, or alkali."



Various utensils, including an egg beater, pastry cutter, Robert's lightning mixer.



Picture of the schooner Oliver Ames currently on display at the Railroad Station, North Easton, MA.

RECIPES, continued

A Crookneck, or Winter Squash Pudding.

Core, boil and skin a good squash, and bruise it well ; take 6 large apples, pared, cored, and stewed tender, mix together ; add 6 or 7 spoonfuls of dry bread or biscuit, rendered fine as meal, one pint milk or cream, 2 spoons of rose-water, 2 do. wine, 5 or 6 eggs beaten and strained, nutmeg, salt and sugar to your taste, one spoon flour, beat all smartly together, bake one hour.

Recipes from The First American Cookbook are not for the faint of heart. Measurements & directions differ from those we are familiar with. Independence cake appears to be quite large— enough to celebrate with the entire village.

Independence Cake.

Twenty pound flour, 15 pound sugar, 10 pound butter, 4 dozen eggs, one quart wine, 1 quart brandy, 1 ounce nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, mace, of each 3 ounces, two pound citron, currants and raisins 5 pound each, 1 quart yeast ; when baked, frost with loaf sugar ; dress with box and gold leaf.

Buck-wheat Cakes.

One quart buck-wheat flour, 1 pint of milk or new beer, 3 spoons molasses, 4 do. yeast, stir well together, wet the bottom of the pan with butter or lard, and when the pan is hot put in the cakes, when done pour over butter and milk.

Federal Pan Cake.

Take one quart of boulted rye flour, one quart of boulted Indian meal, mix it well, and stir it with a little salt into three pints milk, to the proper consistence of pancakes ; fry in lard, and serve up warm.

Women's History

In honor of Women's History Month, March 2024, a collage of women from the Easton Historical Society's Gallery & Events pages.



Easton educators Alyson Sousa Larrabee, Hazel Varella and Evelyn Johnson.

Easton educators Alyson Larrabee, Hazel Varella, Evelyn Johnson.



Oliver Ames Senior Project, 2018-2019.

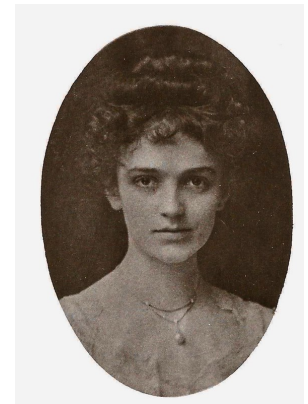


Mary Shreve (Ames) Frothingham, philanthropist.

The 2024 theme celebrates **"Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion."**



Nancy DeLuca, educator and Director.



Blanche Ames, prominent supporter of women's suffrage.

Women's History Month is a celebration of women's contributions to history, culture and society and has been observed annually in the month of March in the United States since 1987.

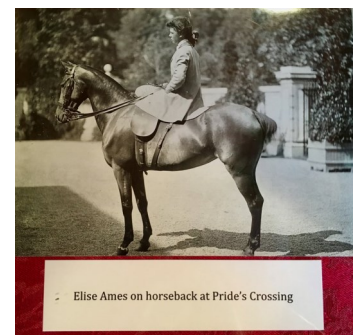
Young Easton girls at Frothingham Park.



Ginny Murray, Director.



Debra Salisbury & Joanne England, Directors, with Hazel Varella.



Elise Parker Ames, committed to the environment and the community.

IN MEMORIAM

John S. Ames III passed away December 15, 2023 at the age of 87. Born in Boston and raised in North Easton, the eldest child of John S. Ames Jr. and Isabel Biddle Henry, John graduated from Harvard University in 1958 and married Mary Alford Ames, with whom he raised two sons, John S. Ames IV and Gavin Henry Ames. He was elected four times to serve as Massachusetts State Representative from Bristol County. One of his accomplishments was the enactment of conservation protection of Hockomock Swamp. John went on to work in the private sector and later devoted much of his time to the art scene in Maine, where he ran Gallery 68. John married Sarah Lowry Ames and together they bought and ran Ten High Street Art and Antiques in Maine before retiring to Boston in 2014.

DONATIONS

Monetary donations have been received from the following people: Jim Carlino, Bob Silva, Kevin Williams, Carol Misiewicz, David DeVore, Charleton Ames, William Ames, Easton Garden Club, Ken Michel, Elizabeth Wood, Judith King, Anne-Marie Meninno, Sandra Day, Jack DeLuca, Anne Marie Burke, Robert Babineau, C. Paula Barretto, Mary Ames, Leslie Mullen, Mark Ingalls, Judith Sabin, Julia Coleman, Linda Lawler, John Kenyon, Dominic Di-Battista, Robert Keller. Thank you so much to our donors!

More Stone Walls



Stone wall in the woods. Borderland.



Stone wall in front of 300 Center Street. Owned & occupied by Abiel Edson in 1810. EHS

Original fencing on New England farms was usually wooden. Stonewalls, when constructed, were no higher than thigh high and could not keep livestock in. Often stone walls were reinforced with brush or wooden fencing, and later barbed wire. When times changed in the late 19th century farms began to die out due to various factors such as agricultural improvements, railroads, and the Industrial Revolution. After 1870 New England forests began to renew, trees took root in small spaces between stones and walls tumbled. Chemical weathering occurred. Many stone walls today are covered in moss or lichen and are in disarray. Later on, when the colonial past became idealized, people revived stone walls. Stone walls were also a consequence of early road building. As roads were cleared, stones were placed on either side, forming walls. Early Easton had many farms and as times changed the nature of the farms did also. Today, along roadsides, old farms, hiking trails, in the woods, many walls remain. Info from [Stone by Stone](#), by Robert M. Thorson.

This picture was taken sometime after 1930 and it features the farm of Henry Wilmarth Heath which was located in the large area in the fork of Prospect and Howard Streets. The farm stood directly opposite 157 Prospect Street. The house dates to about 1829. Note the beautiful stone wall in the forefront. EHS



Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
NO. EASTON, MA
02356
PERMIT NO. 25

Easton Historical Society & Museum
Post Office Box 3
80 Mechanic Street
North Easton, MA 02356
www.eastonhistoricalsociety.org

508-238-7774