

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.

CALENDAR

Sunday, March 11th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M., featuring guest speaker Dwight MacKerron

Thursday, March 29th, Chowder and Chatter, 6:30 P.M. See form inside!

Sunday, April 15th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M.

Saturday, April 21st, Bottle and Can Drive at the Station, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M., rain or shine!

Wednesday, April 25th, meeting with Greg Galer at the Stonehill Industrial History Center, Stonehill College, 7:00 P.M.

Saturday, April 28th, Mystery Walk with Professor Chet Raymo, 10:00 A.M. See form inside!

Sunday, May 20th, Open House at the Station, 1-5 P.M.

Wednesday, May 23rd, Annual Meeting with Ken Gloss at Borderland, 7:00 P.M. Bring a book for Ken to appraise!

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—Karen R. Cacciapuoti,
Nancy DeLuca, James Morrison, Andrew R. Salisbury, Robert J. Wooster
Curator—Frank T. Meninno*

OUR NEW WEB SITE

The Easton Historical Society is absolutely thrilled to present to you our newly established web site, www.eastonhistoricalsociety.org! Planning began a few months ago, when Mr. Jon Gilmore approached us about the need to have an online presence. We were very excited about the idea, but we were lacking in the expertise to do it. Mr. Gilmore then introduced us to Mr. Burt Lewis, whom some of you may know from his excellent web site www.eastonmass.com. After a meeting with the directors, and with a generous donation from Mr. Gilmore to get us started, Mr. Lewis put together a great web site for us.

Our web site features an electronic version of our printed newsletter, a new member form, news about upcoming events, interesting links, a store, email and, of course, items about Easton's history. We are still thinking about ideas for content, and would love to hear from our members about suggestions for our site. The emails have already come from as far as Washington state!

The Easton Historical Society is very grateful for the help provided by Mr. Gilmore and Mr. Lewis. Without their support, we would not have been able to have this great web site. Be sure to check it out, and feel free to email us any suggestions or questions as well.

OPEN HOUSE DATES TO CHANGE!

Our open houses for the months of April and May will be held on the **third Sunday of the month**, as Easter falls on the second Sunday in April, and Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May.

The Station Master

President Deborah MacPhee

Each fall the Board of Directors holds a planning meeting. This past year, the group reviewed ideas for updating our mission statement to reflect the current focus of the Society. A sub-committee of the board comprised of Hazel Varella, Frank Meninno, and I took the ideas from that meeting and drafted a new mission statement, which was subsequently approved by the entire Board of Directors at our November meeting. The new mission statement encompasses all that we strive to be as a society.

Easton Historical Society Mission Statement

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

- Encourage community interest in Easton's history.
- Develop educational programs for people of all ages.
- Maintain the former Old Colony Railroad Station as our headquarters and museum.
- Collect, conserve, and exhibit artifacts from our archives and collections.
- Encourage research of Easton's history.
- Work with other historical, preservation, civic, cultural, and educational organizations.

The Directors felt strongly that our mission statement include the maintenance of the Old Colony Rail Road Station, since it serves as both our home and an excellent example of work by famous Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson. We take our responsibility to maintain this historic site very seriously, and will be creating a five year maintenance plan for the building and grounds. We will then use that plan to help seek funding to achieve the identified maintenance goals.

Throughout the mission statement is the theme of inspiring interest in our town's rich history, and special mention is made to tailoring programs to people of all ages. Our curator, Frank Meninno, has done a great job at improving the quality of our monthly open house. If you have not dropped into one of these in a while, I encourage you to visit one of our next ones. We have tailored some of our offering to Easton's youngest residents. In 2006, we held a walking tour and scavenger hunt for kids of all ages and we plan to do this again this year.

Our mission is a living statement that guides our activities. If you have thoughts on the mission statement, please stop into an open house and share them with us.

Debi MacPhee
President

How well do you know your roads? See if you can identify the names or locations of these old Easton roads. Good luck!

- 1: What road was once known as the "Littlefield Road"?
- 2: Where was Island Street?
- 3: What local way was formerly called the "coal road"?
- 4: What well known street was formerly called Grove Street?
- 5: What road was known to the locals as "Jockey Lane"?
- 6: Where was "Perry Lane"?

Try not to peek, but the answers are on page 4!

UPCOMING EVENTS

During our Sunday, March 11th open house, Dwight Mac Kerron will present a slide show and lecture on "Hodges Tavern". The talk will begin at 2:00 P.M. Mr. Mac Kerron is a member of the Easton Historical Society as well as the current president of the Stoughton Historical Society. Hodges Tavern, later called the "old Shepherd place" by Chaffin in the "History of Easton", was located on Bay Road opposite its intersection with Randall Street. The account books of this business operation lists the names of scores of Easton residents, many of whom are mentioned by Chaffin. Included are a number of women who were engaged in the braiding of straw, making bonnets and selling their wares to Captain Samuel Hodges in exchange for store credit. These records are among the earliest in the area to document that women had their own business accounts apart from their husbands. From the time that Asa Willis is credited fifty cents for hanging up Hodges sign to the last entry in the fall of 1812, the records reveal a fascinating slice of life of scores of Easton, Sharon and Stoughton families.

Mr. Mac Kerron, the former English Department head at Newton South High School, has spent the last four years researching the journals of Henry David Thoreau, the primary documents left by Oliver Ames, his father Captain John Ames, and the emergence of the straw, shovel and cotton industries in the first decades of the nineteenth century. He lives on Ames-Long Pond in Stoughton, and his interest in the areas natural resources led him to an interest in history. Mr. Mac Kerron has given presentations to the Sharon and Stoughton Historical Societies. This presentation is made possible by a grant from the Easton Cultural Council.

Join us for a time of "Chowder and Chatter" on March 29th, 6:30 P.M. at Southeastern Regional High School. Once again, we are indebted to the generosity of Lee and Kevin Williams for underwriting the cost of this wonderful evening. This years topic is "Early Conservation Efforts in Easton", focusing especially on the 1960's. Guest panelists will be Lyn White, Alice McCarthy, John Grant and Virginia Reusch. One look around Easton will tell you that we have much to be grateful for because of their efforts. Seating is limited, and this event sells out quickly! Use the form on page 5 in this newsletter to reserve your place today!

On April 25th, join us for a special meeting at the Stonehill College Industrial History Center. Dr. Greg Galer, Curator of the Industrial History Center, and Nicole Tourangeau, Stonehill College Archivist and Special Collections Librarian, will share recent activities and upcoming events involving the college's historical collections. Recent acquisitions, new discoveries, and ongoing projects will be discussed and viewed. The meeting will conclude with a tour of the Industrial History Center and its collections. Plan on meeting at the Cushing-Martin Hall (the old library at Stonehill) at 7:00 P.M. When entering the college from Washington Street (Route 138), follow the road to the right into a large parking area. The Cushing-Martin Hall is the older building adjacent to the lot. We thank Dr. Galer and Ms. Tourangeau for hosting this special meeting!

Professor Chet Raymo will lead a small group walk on Saturday, April 28th. Professor Raymo has done some interesting walks for us over the last few years, and we are sure this one will be terrific as well. Space is limited to 20 people, so that everyone will be able to hear Professor Raymo as he speaks. Use the form on page 5 to reserve your spot. Tickets are \$15 each. The walk will begin at 10:00 A.M. We will send you the information as to where to meet. Walking in the woods may be difficult at times. Wear comfortable walking shoes and be prepared to do some hiking through the trails of Easton! We thank Professor Raymo for his continued support of the Society, and for leading another exciting walk for us!

Our annual meeting will be held on May 23rd in the library of the former Ames mansion at Borderland State Park. The meeting will start at 7:00 P.M. with a short business meeting, and then proceed to a presentation by Mr. Ken Gloss of Boston's famous Brattle Book Shop and Antique Road Show fame. Mr. Gloss was here four years ago, and his talks are always interesting. The ambience of the library only adds to the evening. Bring a favorite book with you. Mr. Gloss will give you a verbal appraisal of your book, and maybe some tidbits of knowledge about it. Many thanks to the kind folks at Borderland State Park for allowing us to use this unique setting for our meeting.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

- Large ice tongs and a long ice hook, from Monte's Ice House, donated by Mrs. Pasis Garniss.
- Collection of glass items including a Sundell's ashtray, canning jars and lids, Randall's Dairy milk bottle, Cliquot Club soda bottle, and three medicine bottles found near Lexington Estates on Center Street, given by Dick Bissett.
- An 1877 math book found in an upstairs wall in a house on Main Street, given by Anne and Thomas Hutchinson.
- Simpson Spring plastic bottle caps, given by Wayne Southworth.
- Records and equipment from the Sealer of Weights and Measures, donated by the Town of Easton.
- Scrapbooks kept by Mrs. Margaret Williams, given by Lee Williams.
- World War One items including a draft list and a report of the Welcome Home Committee, given by Ernie Camara.
- A wooden box, hand lettered with birth information and an 1876 diary, both owned by Samuel Hayward, via eBay.
- A framed Mabel Brenner painting, via eBay.

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



Early Bottled Water

Do you know that the purified bottled water craze of today actually began decades ago? Here is an early example of a green glass Simpson Spring water bottle that would have been stocked on the shelves of finer stores.

It is clearly labeled for consumer purchase. "The Simpson Spring Water" is boldly printed on the front of the paper label, along with the company name and address at South Easton. The label also states that "this water is used exclusively in the making of all Simpson Spring beverages" along with the famous line "ask for them."

On the left panel of the label is a description of the water. "Simpson Spring water is a natural Spring Water of the Purest Quality. As a Table Water it is unsurpassed. Drink freely of this water at all times in preference to ordinary water. Contents two quarts."

The panel to the right of the front label is most interesting. It lists the results of a chemical analysis dated April 6th, 1927. The water was tested by a private laboratory in Boston. The fact that the water had no color, no turbidity or odor, along with a very low iron, chlorine and nitrate content, attested to its natural spring fed purity. This led to a closing summation by the independent testers which states "The water is of excellent appearance, and free from excessive amounts of either organic or inorganic matters. It is soft and free from pollution. Dietetically, it belongs to the diuretic class of spring waters whose function is to promote the elimination of waste from the body, particularly by stimulating the action of the kidneys." That is quite a mouthful of water to swallow!

Road Trivia answers—1: Summer Street was formerly called the Littlefield Road; 2: Island Street was off of Pond Street, and led to the old shovel shop site between Shovel Shop Pond and Langwater Pond; 3: Pond Street was the old coal road; 4: Belmont Street was once known as Grove Street; 5: Jockey Lane is now South Street, between Foundry Street and Highland Street; 6: Perry Lane was off Poquanticut Avenue and led past the Perry house to the small foundry behind it. How did you do?

MYSTERY WALK RESERVATION FORM

Professor Chet Raymo will lead twenty Society members and friends on a special mystery walk on Saturday, April 28th. Please use this form to make your reservation. Tickets are \$15 each, and checks should be made payable to the "Easton Historical Society." Tickets will be available on a first come, first served basis only. This event will not be offered to the general public.

Please send this form and your check to: Mrs. Hazel Varella, 121 Center Street, North Easton, MA 02356. You will be notified by phone and given information regarding when and where to meet. Thank you for your support!

Name _____
 Address _____
 Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Phone _____ Email _____
 Number of tickets requested _____ x \$15 Total Enclosed _____

2007 Chowder and Chatter Reservation Form

The Easton Historical Society's annual Chowder and Chatter evening will be held on March 29th, 2007. Please plan on arriving at the Southeastern Regional High School by 6:30 P.M. The school is conveniently located at 250 Foundry Street (Route 106) in South Easton. Once again, Lee and Kevin Williams have generously offered to underwrite the cost of this event. As in the past, there is no cost to you. However, any donations made will go towards paying off the debt incurred by the Society for the heating system installation. Donations by check should be made out to the "Easton Historical Society." Your generosity is very much appreciated!

Seating for this popular event is limited, and member requests will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Any seats still available after March 17th will be offered to the general public.

Please send this completed form to: Mrs. Hazel Varella, 121 Center Street, North Easton, MA 02356.

Name _____
 Address _____
 Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Phone Number _____ Email address _____

SPRING BOTTLE DRIVE and SPRING CLEANING

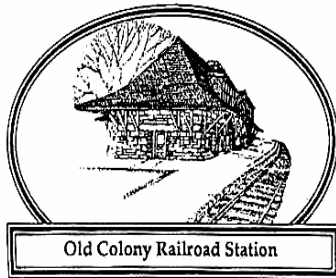
Our annual spring bottle and can drive will be held on Saturday, April 21st from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. at the Society museum, the former Old Colony Railroad Station on Mechanic Street, North Easton, MA. Ken Martin and his able assistant Ed Hands will be on site to accept your clean bottles and cans. The drive will be held rain or shine! All proceeds from this event will be used to defray the costs of heating our museum. Larger amounts of bottles and cans may be picked up by calling Ken Martin at 508-238-2185. The Easton Historical Society thanks you for your continued support of this important fundraiser!

If you can stay for a while, we sure could use your help! We are looking for volunteers who might want to do some light cleaning, polishing and dusting. We will supply the cleaning items, coffee and interesting conversation, as well as a chance to get to

We are currently in the process of changing our mailing labels. You will notice that we have added your membership status in the top right corner. The recently mailed dues letter also had this format. If you see a "2006" on your label, your dues are due. Once received, we will change it to "2007". We have tried to be as accurate as possible. However, if you feel an error has been made, please accept our apologies. Please let us know what the error is and we will correct it. Thank you for your patience with us as we continue to upgrade our records.

Speaking of dues, many of you have already sent yours in, and we appreciate that! We are also thankful to those members who were able to send an extra donation. The next newsletter should have your corrected membership labels.

EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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www.eastonhistoricalsociety.org

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