

ESTEY ORGAN MUSEUM SLATES CELEBRATION AND NEW EXHIBIT

Brattleboro, VT (*September 25, 2025*) – The Estey Organ Museum will host an open house on Tuesday, September 30 to celebrate several milestones. The day will mark the 213th birthday of Estey Organ Company founder Jacob Estey. Museum trustees will celebrate completion of this year's special organ restoration project. In addition, an 8'x12' mural, enlarged from a 150-year old Estey poster, will be dedicated to long-time museum volunteer John Carnahan. The public is invited to this free event from 4-6 p.m.

Production of the mural was made possible by the collaboration of people dedicated to preserving local history. It began years ago with a phone call to local collector Mark Richards from John Carnahan a founding member of the Brattleboro Historical Society. Richards recalls, "John was a great man; he was my boy scout leader; we go way back. A long time ago John became aware of this Estey poster for sale for \$1,200. The BHS couldn't afford it, and so my father and I bought it. It hung in our offices and every year we loaned it to the Society for exhibits. A few years ago, I finally donated it to them."

Earlier this year Estey museum trustee Dennis Waring mounted a project to produce a mural to hang in the museum. He chose his favorite Estey image, the illustration of the factory, which was donated by Richards to the BHS. With permission, the 2'x3' poster was put into the expert hands of John Clements and Nel McNeil of Zephyr Designs who carefully removed it from the frame. Museum trustee Allan Seymour photographed it and passed the file to the folks at Minuteman Press who printed the 8'x12' mural.

Framing and mounting the mural fell into the hands of John Clements of Zephyr. Beneath it sits a piece of slate from the Estey buildings bearing the inscription: Dedicated to John Carnahan for his civic spirit and dedication to the Town of Brattleboro. September 30, 2025.

The original poster is an artist's depiction of the Estey Organ factory operation in the late 1800s. The company produced several iterations, and Waring preferred this one. "Estey was a marketing genius and this image says it all. Beyond the monumental row of eight three-story buildings, ever-smoking chimney, piles of lumber, and Esteyville above that housed many of the Estey workers, it shows insight into the culture of the Victorian period of nineteenth century industrial America. In the corners of the mural are cameos of the three proprietors, and a Victorian parlor scene with fashionable woman preparing to play the organ. These tout the administrative stability and period sociability of the times."

The open house will also celebrate the completed restoration of Estey's 100,000th reed organ. As production approached this milestone in the late 1870s, Estey designed a special model for the occasion, calling it the Salon, which became very popular. Estey understood the power of words, and the Salon model soon became the Grand Salon. Museum trustee Craig Cowing has spent the summer readying the organ for a musical debut on the 30th.

The Estey Organ Museum is located in the Estey Factory Complex on Birge Street in Brattleboro. The complex is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The museum is open from 2-4 p.m. on weekends from May through October. For more information visit www.esteyorganmuseum.org.

Estey Organ Museum Open House, September 30, 4-6 p.m. Free admission. 4:30: Mural dedication, remarks, and music.

Media Contact: Sally Seymour, 603-852-0731, sallyvt@me.com

.jpg files attached

Images below for reference and caption information



CAPTION: Nel McNeil of Zephyr Designs inspects an original poster published 150 years ago by the Estey Organ Company. John Clements of Zephyr and Allan Seymour of the Estey Organ Museum look on. The poster will be photographed and enlarged to mural-size to hang in the Estey Organ Museum.
PHOTO CREDIT: Sally Seymour



CAPTION: SNEAK PREVIEW. Amos Putnam of Minuteman Press inspects the 8'x12' mural which his company produced for the Estey Organ Museum. The mural will be dedicated to long-standing volunteer of both the museum and Brattleboro Historical Society, John Carnahan, who passed away earlier this year.
PHOTO CREDIT: Allan Seymour