



Vol. 21, No. 9

September 2024

The Gateway Gazette

The Newsletter of the Lee Historical Society

Our unique history and blend of people defines the foundation of our Town.

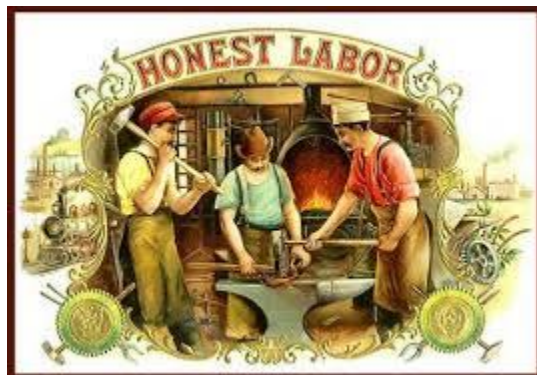
Email: Lee.Historical@hotmail.com

Website: leehistoricsociety.homestead.com

Facebook: Lee Historical Society Lee MA

Mail: PO Box 170, Lee, MA 01238

The Monthly Meeting of the Society will be Thursday, September 12 at the Historical Society Office, Crossway Tower, Lee. 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm.



FROM THE EDITORS

September has to be the busiest month of the year for the Lee Historical Society as we have so much going on. Please refresh your memories by reading about it all on our Lee Bulletin Board - we don't want you to miss a thing! The members have been working very hard to organize these many activities and we hope that any of you who have not yet decided to volunteer with us will give this more thought. Being a member of the Society and becoming involved is not only beneficial for our Town, but has its own personal rewards. Seeing the reactions, for example, of the wonderful folk who volunteered for our Chris Long Memorial Fund gravestone clean-up at Fairmount Cemetery was hugely rewarding. As the names and details of those who left us long ago were revealed once more, giving them back the respect they deserve, we all were graced with a feeling that we had truly achieved something special. Tracie at ethere@gmail.com and Linda at lindabreader@icloud.com will be more than happy to share with you what being members of our Society has given to us, so don't be hesitant to contact us.

ARTICLES BY BETTY DENNIS

Back by popular demand, one of dear Betty Dennis' always interesting articles, this one dated April 5, 1977. This one takes us back to the days when the telephone was a novelty rather than something you carried around in your back pocket and used to snap memories of yourself doing something silly!



In 1878 the "Gleaner and Advocate" tells us it would "make cold shivers" run down a superstitious back to have sat in the telegraph office as a small party did on a Saturday evening. They heard "John Brown's Body" sung at West Winstead, Conn. Those who were there knew it was nothing superstitious. It was simply a wonderful example of the workings of the wonderful telephone. Mr. Heath of our town had arranged for this telephone communication with the manager, C.K. Hun, of West Winstead. For over an hour speech and song were transmitted through the 64 miles of wire connecting the two operators. "Rock of Ages" was sung by Mr. Hunt, while Mr. McAlpine of Lee played a clarinet {sic} solo and the Winstead operator amazingly was almost able to identify the instrument. Conversation, however, had to be carried on in a loud tone, and even then all the words could not be distinguished though a sentence could be understood occasionally. The experiment, as a while, was far beyond the expectations of the operators.

In January the next year, a concert by telephone between Lenox and Lee was given. The music on the part of Lenox was remarkably fine, especially the flute and horn duet, and the Ocarina or "Potato Machine". The Lee music due to other engagements of the expected performers, was wanting, but several songs were sung and conversation freely carried on.

One of the first phones to be installed in Lee was at the home of John Dowd, Selectman from about 1861 to 1881. Because of his elected position in town a phone was deemed necessary. His home on Cape Street, East Lee, is still occupied.

MEET THE BOARD **ELLEN WHITTAKER**



"Ciao, come stai?" That's Ellen for "Hello! How are you?" Or, "Dia duit, conas ata tu?" That's Ellen asking the same thing in Irish. Like so many of Lee's population, Ellen's family history goes back to countries other than the U.S.A. Her paternal grandparents, Angela Trentin and Pietro Scolforo, emigrated directly to Lee from Gambellara, Veneto, Italy in the Italian wine region. Pietro came to the United States first in November 1906 and once he was settled he sent for Angela in May 1907. Ellen's maternal grandmother, Mary Agnes Ruddy, was born in 1888 in County Mayo on the west coast of Southern Ireland. She moved to England and lived there for seven years before migrating to the United States and settling in Manchester, New Hampshire.

She had a daughter, Kathleen, who was fostered soon after birth to two English sisters named Dawson. At fifteen, Kathleen moved to Lee from Methuen, Massachusetts to work for the Deely family on Whiteholme Road in Lee as a cook's helper. It was at a monthly card party held for the youth in town, organized by a women's group from St. Mary's Church, that Kathleen and Leo Scolforo met, fell in love, and later married and introduced Ellen and her three siblings to the world. The Lee Library Gallery is named after their middle son, J. Peter Scolforo. Peter served for many years on the Library Board and was very involved in the building of the addition.

Ellen graduated Lee High School and went on to study for one year at North Adams State College (now Massachusetts College of Arts) and then began her career at Berkshire Life Insurance Company where she worked for thirty years and for ten years at Guardian Life Insurance. While working, she studied in the evenings at Berkshire Community College and then at American International College where she earned a Degree in Business Administration.

Far from being ensconced in a cubicle in an office at some lofty corporate building, Ellen actually often spent much time during the last twenty years of her career traveling either in the United States or from one continent to another. She was involved in lending corporate money to fortunate companies around the world and visited their facilities from as far as Australia to South Africa. Among other interesting destinations, her journeys took her to a gold mine and factories in South China.

Ellen has plenty of interests and hobbies to keep her active now that she's retired, one obviously being local history, and she has been a Board Member of our Society for the last two years, currently holding the position of Chairperson of the Program Committee. It's thanks to Ellen's industry that we can offer so many fantastic programs!

She is also President of the G. Marconi Lodge #1620, Order Sons and Daughters of Italy, aka Lee Sons and Daughters Italy. She can often be heard chatting away in Italian at the Cappuccino Club where members enjoy Italian conversation. And then she's a Commissioner for the Benefit Insurance Commission, a part of the Grand Lodge of the Sons and Daughters of Italy. Such a busy lady!

Somehow she manages to find the time to research family history, visit estate sales, tend her flower garden, and gather with friends and family for lunches and dinners. Her family includes husband Bill, children Michael and Karen, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Her ambitions extend to keeping our Society moving forward. This includes encouraging membership activity in our various projects and activities, finding the Society a permanent home, and to continue to promote the Society within the community.

LEE BULLETIN BOARD

SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

We are repeating the information we printed in the August newsletter as there are probably many of you who didn't get to read that edition for various reasons, particularly for our summer visitors. If that is you, please do join us in any of the events we discuss here. All are welcome.

MAIN STREET HISTORY WALKS

These walks, sponsored by the Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area, are conducted by the Society's leading expert on the history of Lee's main thoroughfare, historic Main Street, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Tracie will give an in-depth lecture on not only the buildings, but will recount tales of their maybe not-so-well-known past and that of the people who lived or worked in them, some dating back to the early 1800's. The first walk will be on Sunday, September 8th, leaving from the gazebo on Railroad Street at 10 a.m. The next walk will be on Saturday, September 28th, same place, at 3:00 p.m.

For any questions, please contact Tracie at ethere@gmail.com.



CEMETERY TOURS



This year we will again have our very popular tours of both St. Mary's and Fairmount Cemeteries. For those who haven't yet attended, each year we research the lives of various people of Lee who have departed so we can tell you their stories as we walk our beautiful cemeteries. Last year, we included St. Mary's for the first time to much acclaim and so we are including it again this year. That tour will be on Thursday, September 19th, commencing at 9:30 a.m. The following day, Friday, September 20th, we will tour Fairmount, also commencing at 9:30. The tours generally last between one to one and a half hours, are free of charge, and no registration is required. Just turn up with your bug spray and sunscreen!

For any questions, please contact Tracie Etheredge at ethere@gmail.com.

THE PARADE

We'd probably all agree that Founders Weekend is one event of the year that we all look forward to with great excitement. There is so much going on, opening with the Taste of Lee on Friday, September 20th. As is the tradition, Main Street will be closed to traffic so that our local eateries can bring their dishes to the sidewalk to feed the happy revelers filling the street with chatter and laughter instead of rumbling trucks and SUV's. The end of the evening will culminate in the best firework display in Berkshire County! Saturday will get off to a phenomenal start with THE PARADE! And that is what we want to tell you about here.



This year, the Historical Society will be leading the parade with Phil Smith and Linda Buttery holding the banner and followed by the Adamsville Ancients Fife and Drum Corps from Delmar, NY. This is the first time in the history of the parade that these folks will be joining us and we are delighted to have them.

When the parade finally reaches its conclusion, the Adamsville Ancients are not finished! Just to make the day even more perfect, they will be returning to the Park and will be playing for all of us outside the Congregational Church between about 11 until 11:30, providing a wonderful musical backdrop to the festivities. This is definitely a Not To Miss event!

FOUNDERS' DAY BOOTH



As we do every year during Founders' Weekend, this year on Friday, September 20th at the Taste of Lee and on Saturday, September 21st, we will be manning our Society booth at the corner of Memorial Hall where you can meet various of our Board members, browse our selection of merchandise from mugs to t-shirts to books and so much more, and hopefully make a purchase or two. Our members will be more than happy to discuss aspects of Lee history with you, so come equipped with your questions. Interested in joining our Society? You can do that right there at our table. Hope to see you then!

ANNUAL CALENDAR RAFFLE

Our very popular raffle is back! It had been, until COVID, an annual event and we are delighted to re-institute it this year. This is our major fundraiser of the year, so all who purchase tickets are not only eligible to win some rather spectacular prizes, donated by our local businesses, but are also contributing in part toward an annual scholarship awarded to a graduating Lee High School Senior. Furthermore, the funds we raise enable us to present for free many educational and interesting programs to the public throughout the year. Prizes from the raffle will be awarded each day in November.

The tickets will be available starting Wednesday, September 18th and are available from Society members and at our Founders Weekend booth. Keep your eyes open as you may spot one of us outside Big Y, perhaps, or somewhere on Main Street with our sign and a bunch of tickets for sale! Stop us and buy one – or two! Only \$10 a ticket and who knows, you could be a big winner!

CHRISTOPHER “CHRIS” LONG MEMORIAL FUND FAIRMOUNT CEMETERY GRAVESTONE CLEANING

Our very first gravestone cleaning in June was extremely successful and we had so many volunteers that we are now planning another in October. This will be on Saturday the 12th. We will again meet at the vault at 9 a.m. and work until 11 a.m. Tim Schaeffer will once more be giving a demonstration of his skills on how to go about the cleaning. We will be supplying all the necessary equipment. All participants need to bring is gloves, sunscreen, and bug spray. Please register with us if you intend to join us by contacting Tracie at ethere@gmail.com or Linda at lindabreader@icloud.com.



Photo courtesy of Lauren Bolte

AN UPDATE ABOUT AN AUGUST ARTICLE

You may remember our article “Histories Mysteries” mentioned Mr. Hamblin’s hill upon the opposite side of Greenwater River, and our request if anyone knew where that was to advise us. Well, as it happens, our Treasurer, Caroline Young does know and did, and this is what she tells us:

“Hamblin Hill is the hill the turnpike is now on, a little to the east of my house [in East Lee]. The Hamblin house is still there.”

Thanks to Caroline for the update Now we’re all that little bit wiser. It’s such a joy when we get feedback from our readers!

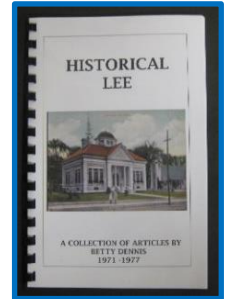
WHAT'S AT OUR BOOTH?

We know you'll all be flocking to see the fabulous merchandise we will have on display at our booth on Founders Day, so we decided to give you a preview! Once again, we will be offering BOGO on our mugs and a special on our picture packets. These are not-to-be-missed offers. Should you be tempted to make a purchase, as we know you will, but can't make it to our booth, you can email either Tracie at ethere@gmail.com or Linda at lindabreader@icloud.com, let us know what you'd like, and we'll meet you wherever is convenient so you won't be disappointed.



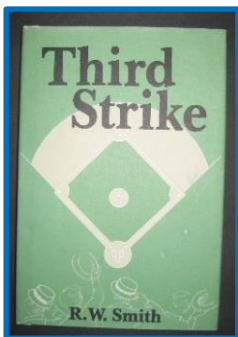
T-SHIRTS Show your pride and support of your Town with a Lee T-shirt. Sizes Small, XLarge, and 2X Large
\$15

"HISTORICAL LEE" If you've read any of beloved Lee Librarian Betty Dennis' articles reprinted in our newsletter from time to time, you can now own a whole book of them, so pick one up for just **\$12** and settle down for a great bedtime read.



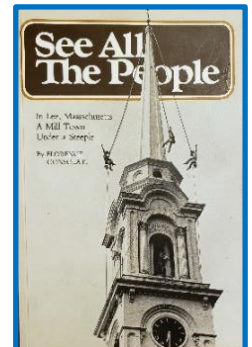
MUGS depicting various places of historical interest in Lee. At just **\$5** each, this would normally be a steal, but on offer at BOGO, how can you not take advantage? Rumor has it that the morning coffee tastes extra delicious in one of these exquisite beverage containers!

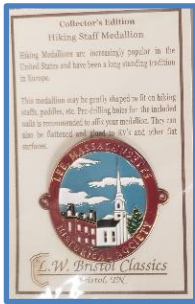
PICTURE PACKETS These beautiful prints depict scenes of Lee from yesteryear, including Main Street before the automobile, and the magnificent Congregational Church. Perfect for framing and only **\$6 per packet or two for \$10**. Your walls will look even more Berkshirish once you embellish them with these!



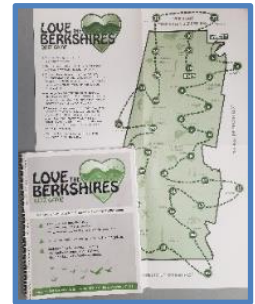
"THIRD STRIKE" by R.W. Smith. This is a wonderful book chock full of stories of the everyday people of Lee. An incredible bargain for only **\$5!**

"SEE ALL THE PEOPLE" by Florence Consolati. If you want the intimate details of every aspect of the history of Lee, and don't already own at least one copy, this is a must-have purchase! **\$26**





HIKING STAFF MEDALLION Another great addition to our selection!! For all you hikers out there who love to pound the beautiful trails with which the Berkshires are blessed, this is something totally unique. Our metal medallions depict two of our landmarks – the Congregational Church and Memorial Hall. Their use is very versatile, initially designed to adorn your favorite hiking pole, they can also be flattened out and attached to, say, your camper, sewn



on to your favorite cap or hiking jacket. AND, they're only **\$5** each! Go, on, you know you want one!

“LOVE THE BERKSHIRES QUIZ GAME” A new offering to our selection of merchandise, this is a trivia game designed and produced by our own Phil Smith. First brought to the market in 2010, it sold like hot cakes and of the original one thousand, only a handful are left. Phil has kindly donated them to sell at our booth and, originally selling for \$30, we have decided on only **\$15**, with all proceeds going to the Society.

LEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2024 MEMBERSHIP FORM (JANUARY – DECEMBER)

Individual: \$10.00 Family: \$25.00
Supporting: \$50.00 or more Sponsor: \$100.00 or more

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/TOWN: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

NEW: _____ RENEWAL: _____

Mail with Membership Fee to: Lee Historical Society, PO Box 170, Lee, MA 01238

The Society is always in search of volunteers for our various events – the more, the merrier! If you would like to assist, please check any or all of the following, and thank you for your support:

Program Set-up: _____ Provide Refreshments at Events: _____ Address Mailings: _____
Founders Day (march in the parade/assist at our booth): _____

We always have room for more volunteers to assist us in so many different ways. Kathy Smith is our Membership Committee Chairperson and knows of all the different areas. If you have any questions, thoughts, suggestions, feel free to email her at kf23smith@yahoo.com.

Thanks to all for supporting the Lee Historical Society!

THESE BUSINESSES SUPPORT US.....PLEASE SUPPORT THEM

Bartini Roofing Company
 290 Pleasant Street
243-0570

Fox Homes
 225 Housatonic St.
243-1950

Toole Insurance Co.
 195 Main Street
243-0089



Clark's Nursery
 A family owned business in the Berkshires for over 30 years
 1210 Pleasant St., Lee, MA 01238
 (413) 243-0660
 ClarksNursery@gmail.com
 Annuals, perennials, vegetables, and landscape design services



Pete Sorrentino
 Owner
 P (413) 243-0326
 F (413) 243-8109
Fraser Auto Services Inc.
 139 West Park St.
 P.O. Box 905
 Lee, MA 01238
 E-mail: fraserautoservice@msn.com
 We accept ALL major Credit Cards

vinyl lips - stereos - art - crystals - jewelry
UPTOWN
 antiques - collectibles - and a whole lot more
 266 Main Street, Lee, MA 01238
Marc Manoli
 413-358-0107 Marc@theuptownstore.org
 SHOP OUR EBAY: www.stores.ebay.com/arcnoli

LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL J. CONSIDINE
Michael J. Considine
 Attorney at Law
 49 Main Street, P.O. Box 378
 Lee, Massachusetts 01238
 Email: michaeljconsidine@49mainlaw.com
 Tel: 413-243-4900
 Fax: 413-243-4775



MJ KELLY
Funeral Home
 Established in 1806 Family owned since 1872
 3 Main Street • Lee, MA 01238
 413-243-0204

A.F. VIALE INSURANCE AGENCY
 SINCE 1912
 AUTO • HOME • RENTERS
 BUSINESS AUTO • CONTRACTOR'S LIABILITY
Paul A. Viale, Owner
www.vialeinsurance.com
 75 MAIN ST. ~ LEE, MA. 01238
 413-243-0347

71 Main Street, Lee, MA 01238
consolati@verizon.net 413-243-0109 F 413-243-4622
CONSOLATI Insurance Inc.
 Customizing Policies Since 1945
 Home Auto Business Umbrella

Henry's Electric Inc.
 EST. 1946
 WE LIGHT THE WAY
John LePrevost
 Home Appliances - Electrical Contracting
 252 MAIN STREET TEL. (413) 243-0690
 LEE, MA 01238 FAX. (413) 243-4609
 Email: john@henryselectricinc.com

Glen Wilcox Plumbing
 PO Box 561
243-2494



Cottage Care
INCORPORATED
 413 243 • 4257
 Fully Insured Free Estimates

Lee Chamber of Commerce
 3 Park Place
243-1705

Your **Color Connection**
 Ann M. LaBier
 Owner
 Full Service Printing
 Graphic Design
 Laser Engraving
 Graphic Design & Printing Company
 36 Pittsfield Road, Lenox, MA 01240
ycc01240@aol.com 413-637-0500
yourcolorconnection.com

DRESSER HULL
 LUMBER & BUILDING SUPPLY COMPANY
 60 RAILROAD STREET
 LEE, MASSACHUSETTS 01238
 Keith Kelly
 Sales
keith.kelly@dresserhull.com
 (413) 243-1400
 (413) 243-4156 - FAX
www.dresserhull.com

Onyx Specialty Papers
 40 Willow Street, South Lee
243-1231

Our printer of choice



R.W.'s TOWING & REPAIRS
 24-Hour Recovery
 55 Ron Way • P.O. Box 799 • Lee, MA 01238
 Ph: (413) 243-0946
 Fax: (413) 243-0948
rwtowing.com
rwtowing@verizon.net
 BILL & BECKY BRUNELL



19 Main Street, Lee
 (413) 243-0136
Zabian's Clothing