



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

The next meeting of the Society will be Thursday, June 9 at the Meeting Room at the Crossway Tower on High Street, Lee. 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm.



“Live in the sunshine. Swim in the sea. Drink in the wild air.”
– Ralph Waldo Emerson –

FROM THE EDITORS

As we write, May is, so far, proving to be a beautiful time in the Berkshires. The sun is shining, the skies are blue, our trees are in bloom and their leaves are, once again, spreading out to shelter us as we head toward June.

One young lady is, we hope, celebrating being pronounced the winner of both the Society’s scholarships! Lindzie Johndro will be heading off to either Penn State or Fairfield Universities with \$500 to put toward her education. Will that be in either psychology or marketing, or perhaps both? Whatever she chooses, we hope you will join us in wishing Lindzie as stellar a university career as she has had during her school years.

We hope you’ve all marked your calendars for our first in a series of programs – The Dodgetown Mystery, Thursday, June 22nd at 6:30! We can guarantee this will be totally fascinating! See you there, folks!

Don’t forget, we love to hear from you – Tracie at ethere@gmail.com and Linda at lindabreader@icloud.com.

ARTICLES BY BETTY DENNIS

MAY 27, 1971

Another story from Lee's beloved librarian/historian, Betty Dennis, is transcribed here, this time telling us something of the history of settlers from Cape Cod and, in particular, one little Matthey Hendy.

The Revolutionary War brought peculiar distress to the people of Cape Cod. Their principal occupations, fishing and coasting were entirely broken up, resulting in the loss of their livelihood. Their need for relocating inspired many of them to become our first settlers. First comers located on the hills of "Cape Street", from the present East Lee Steak House park, east to the Becket Line, and so named in their honor. In the early 1770's, this was the most populous section of town, as here were located the Blacksmith, Shoemaker, Currier and Tanner. According to Dr. Hyde's History of Lee, this section was known as "Dodgetown". It was considered unhealthy to live in the valley near streams or brooks, thus the first log cabins were built on the hillside.

There being no roads to follow, these hardy folks found their way by following marked trees. One little family, whose daughter was riding on top of their belongings on their oxcart, fell to her instant death, when one wheel was caught on a rock. Her's was the first recorded burial in Center (now Fairmount) cemetery. Her grave is located in the oldest section to the left of the now grass covered road. Her headstone still very legible, tells us that "Matthey, daughter of Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Lois Hendy, died May 26, 1773 in the 17th year of her age".



"My glass is run
My grave you see
Prepare to die
And follow me."

Editor's Note: Who remembers the East Lee Steak House? Who owned it? What's there now?

REMEMBERING A LEE VETERAN

We are privileged to be able to record in our newsletter the history of Lee's brave young men and women who served in the forces. And sometimes it's hard to report on one whose life was ended before it really began...

EUGENE L. INGERSOLL (1843 - 1863)

Another young hero of the Civil War, Eugene was only 20 years old when he died on May 27th, 1863. The war, and his family, was to continue without him.

A Lee boy, Eugene was a volunteer serving under Captain A.V. Shannon in Company H of the 49th Massachusetts Regiment. He was one of several men from Lee who took part in the siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana, a stronghold on the Mississippi River. His life was taken from him in a heroic charge on enemy positions. One of the longest sieges in American military history, it took 48 days for his fellow Union soldiers to claim victory over the Confederate soldiers defending their position inside a fort atop a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Inside the embattled men were in dire straits: "We eat all the meat and bread in the fort ... eat all the beef—all the mules—all the Dogs—and all the Rats around us."

Editor's Note: How poignant on reflection that these men on both sides experienced so much suffering and loss of life and yet, if they were to meet now, rather than killing each other, they would probably head to the nearest tavern for some brewskies together.

HONORING ALL LEE VETERANS

The Lee Veterans Wall, recognizing all men and women who have served honorably in the armed services of the United States and its allies, made its debut last July with about 2,500 names found mostly in public sources. The wall is incomplete and there are plans to add missing names on new banners this year. Our goal is to find every qualified veteran and if you know of any veteran who was missed earlier, please let us know.

Any person who served honorably for any period of time in the armed services is qualified to be on our wall if that person ever lived in Lee, is buried in Lee or went to school in Lee. This includes honorable National Guard or Reserves. Any person who ever put on the uniform and swore to defend the nation qualifies.

Partial listings of veterans now on the wall can be found on our website, leemassveterans.homesteadcloud.com. The lists are incomplete, so if you are in doubt please send us information about veterans we may have missed at 2rockpaper9@gmail.com. You can see the kinds of information we are including by looking on our website above. Please don't let the vets in your life go unrecognized.

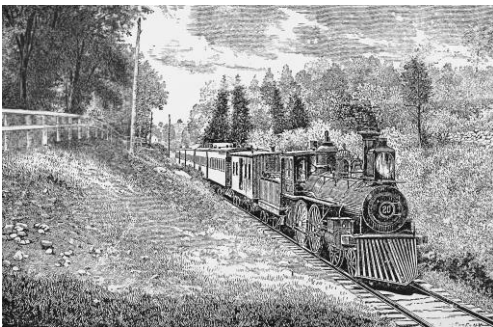


THE LHS BULLETIN BOARD

AN EXHIBIT OF THE LEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY LEE COMES OF AGE: 1850 – 1900

We are just one month away from our exhibit opening in the Scolforo Gallery. Don't forget to mark your calendars for July 1 – 31!

Our annual exhibit is presented in five parts, all major developments of this half-century period:



- The Rail Road Era*
- Marble as a Second Industry
- The Civil War Spurs the Economy
- Downtown Goes Modern
- The Gilded Age

Learn about hazards, crime, and entertainment in Lee in the last half of the 19th Century. These accounts are mostly taken from the pages of our own newspaper, *The Gleaner*, and from various other publications including Pittsfield newspapers.

The exhibit is free and open to the public during regular library hours. Inquire at the desk for viewing times.

**Our learned Phil Smith, who is spearheading this exhibit, has advised that the spelling of rail road as two separate words instead of the more common composite railroad is a salute to the 19th Century where it was originally used in this form.*

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

LEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPEAKER SERIES

As we announced in the May Gateway Gazette, Berkshire historian, retired fine art and antiques specialist Charles Flint will give an illustrated talk about The Dodgetown Mystery on Thursday, June 22, 2023 at 6:30 pm at the Lee Senior Center, 21 Crossway Street. Please mark your calendars for what will be a fascinating evening event.

To recap, Dodgetown, located in East Lee, was once the site of the earliest settlement in Lee in the mid-1700's. Charles' interesting review will help us to understand the journey to that location and why it was chosen. He will explain why it eventually disappeared and what remains of it today.

Upon arrival at the Crossway Village where the Senior Center is located, please enter by the north driveway where visitor parking is available. Walk along the sidewalk across the front of Crossway Village to the Senior Center entrance on Crossway Street. Parking is also available along nearby Academy Street. We will be serving refreshments and look forward to seeing you!



VOLUNTEER NEEDED FOR CTSB!

As most of you may know, CTSB airs videos of events in Lee, including those of the Lee Historical Society. This is a really wonderful service for the Society and very much appreciated. CTSB do not have a volunteer camera person on staff. The details are below.

We are looking for a member of our Society who loves to be behind a movie camera and is willing to get involved. This volunteer, using CTSB equipment, would record the four speaker talks planned each year for airing on CTSB. There are likely to be other events as well. Training in the use of this CTSB equipment takes about 1½ hours. This member would become our recorder of events. For more information, please contact: Ellen Whittaker at: 413-394-5968.

WE HAVE A MYSTERY!

Ellen Whittaker, a Lee Historical Society Board member, has brought to our attention something of great intrigue. It involves the strange disappearance of a notebook written about the history of our town that seems to have vanished into thin air along with all known copies of it.

Below is a copy of an article on this matter which appeared in the Berkshire Evening Eagle of Wednesday, November 9, 1955:

“Photostatic Copies Completed of Lee History by Dr. Wilcox

LEE:-A rare history of Lee has been placed in safe deposit at the Lee Savings Bank and two photostatic copies of the original have been made through the generosity of local townspeople. The history, written by Dr. Dorvil M. Wilcox, was prepared from State House records.

\$219 Donated

Lee firms including Smith Paper Division, Lee Lime, Hurlbut Paper, Clarke-Aiken and the James T. Owens estate donated \$210 *{sic}* for the Photostats which are now in circulation.

For 50 years Dr. Wilcox's notebook, in his own 'copperplate' handwriting, has been in the Lee Library. It is the only one in existence. The photostatic copies are of 300 odd pages each.

Upon his return from three years' service in the Civil War, Dr. Wilcox undertook the job of correcting errors in the works of Gale, Holland, Hyde, Child, and other previous chroniclers of Lee's history.

As chairman of the State Board of Federal Pension Examiners, Dr. Wilcox had access to all military records of Boston. He was one of Lee's most influential citizens.

Valuable to Schools

His notebook is felt to be of real value since a state law in 1948 requests all high schools to teach 'local government and history'.

The notebook records town efforts towards incorporation with copies of petitions to Boston and names of signers; early tax assessments; details of town line surveys; lists of names of those who lived in Lee after incorporation; records of Lee men who served in the Revolution and copies of war payrolls and enlistment records; complete records of the first dozen or more town records; court records of Peter Wilcox at the time of Shay's Rebellion; a reprint of the Lee family names in the first US Census of 1790; the Memorial Hall dedication address of Dr. Nahum Gale; a list of Lee men in the wars of 1812 and 1861-65, although not as detailed as in the Revolution. Many pages are devoted to details correcting the errors of the Gale history and its copiers."

Inquiries have been made at Lee Bank and Lee Library to no avail. It seems the original notebook and the photocopies have gone into oblivion.

As Ellen has expressed, their discovery would allow us to relate Lee history without the caveat that we're unable to validate the actual accuracy of what is being told. Now we turn to our readers and fellow history lovers to ask if any of you have any clues that could lead us to the discovery of this very important notebook and its photocopies for our Town. We welcome any and all thoughts. Ellen can be reached at ellenwhit@aol.com; Tracie at ethere@gmail.com, and Linda at lindabreader@gmail.com.



WHAT'S IN OUR STORE

SUMMER SPECIALS!

Although the traditional astronomical start of summer is June 21, we've decided to go with the meteorological start for June 1st and to get everyone off to a great start to those lazy, hazy days. And what better way to enjoy a sunny Sunday afternoon than with a cold lemonade and a book on baseball? Or, if it's not so summery, as can happen, be inside framing beautiful prints of our sweet Town? If it's warm enough for a t-shirt, surely it should be one from the Lee Historical Society?

Take a look at what we have in our store and – drum roll – should you decide to purchase any of our fabulous wares, we will give you one of our magnificent mugs as a thank you! Of course, if you decide to buy a mug for your morning coffee, or afternoon tea, it'll be BOGO time – Buy One, Get One!

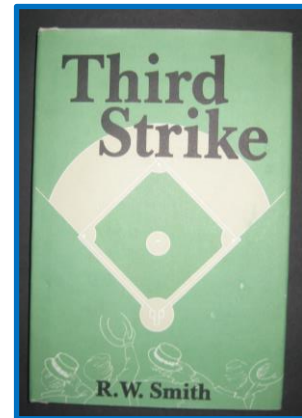
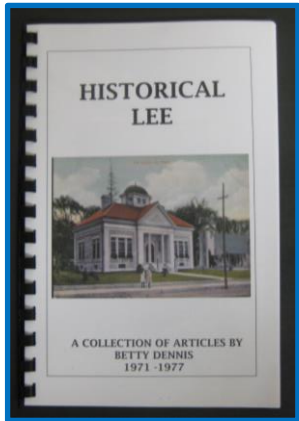


MUGS depicting various places of historical interest in Lee. **\$5**



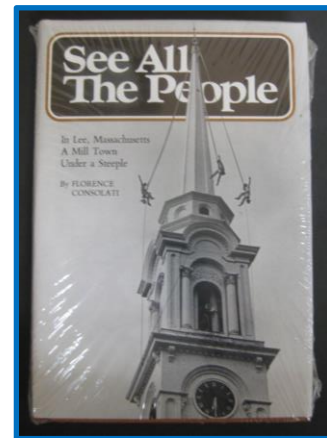
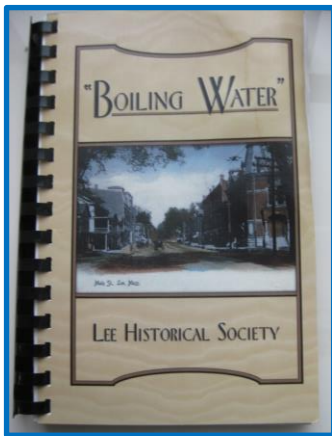
PICTURE PACKETS Six beautiful prints with scenes of Lee, perfect for framing. **\$6 per packet**

T-SHIRTS Show your pride and support of your Town with a Lee T-shirt. Sizes: Small, Large, XLarge, and 2XLarge (Sorry, no Mediums left). **\$15**



“HISTORICAL LEE” A lovely little book of articles collected by Lee’s beloved librarian, Betty Dennis. **\$12**

“THIRD STRIKE” by R.W. Smith For all you baseball fans and Lee lovers, this is the perfect book! At only **\$5**, it’s a home run!



“BOILING WATER” This delightful book was compiled by the Society’s Cookbook Committee back in 2005 and is full of the most mouth-watering recipes, such as Molasses Spice Cookies. It includes some pages by Florence Consolati on various places of historical interest in Lee. **\$8**

“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**

IF YOU LOVE LOCAL HISTORY ...

... how about joining us and becoming a member of the Lee Historical Society? You can also give a Gift Membership to a friend or relative and not only help support our Society, but also join fellow lovers of this wonderful little town in learning about and helping to preserve its history.

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

Individual: \$10.00 Family: \$25.00 *Business: \$35.00
Supporting Membership: \$50.00 or more Sponsor Membership: \$100.00 or more

NAME: _____

*BUSINESS NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/TOWN: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

NEW: _____ RENEWAL: _____

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

* Please include your business card if joining as a Business Member. For more information, please contact Kathy Smith at kf23smith@yahoo.com.

LEE THEN AND NOW



Lee Main Street, looking north, at the corner of Academy Street. The Baptist Church is on the left. This image is from the Historical Society's postcard collection and is from around the 1890's.



Lee Main Street, looking north, at the corner of Academy Street. Taken May 2023. The Baptist Church was built in 1852, and the congregation was dissolved c.1917. Eventually the building and property was transferred to St. Mary's Catholic Church.

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

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

R.W.'s TOWING & REPAIRS
 24 Hour Recovery
 35 Run Way • P.O. Box 294 • Lee, MA 01238
 Ph: (413) 243-0946
 Fax: (413) 243-0948
 rwstowing.com
 rwstowing@verizon.net
 BILL & BECKY BRUNELL



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

Henry's Electric Inc.
 EST. 1946
 WE LIGHT THE WAY
John LePrevost
 Home Appliances - Electrical Contracting

252 MAIN STREET
 LEE, MA 01238

TEL: (413) 243-0690
 FAX: (413) 243-4609

Email: john@henryselectricinc.com

vinyl lps - stereos - art - crystals - jewelry

UPTOWN
 antiques - collectibles - and a whole lot more
 266 Main Street, Lee, MA 01238

Marc Manoli

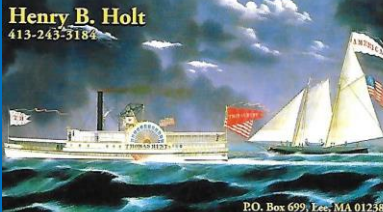
413-358-0107
 Marc@theuptownstore.org
 SHOP OUR EBAY: www.stores.ebay.com/arcnoli

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 B. Holt
 413-243-3184



P.O. Box 699, Lee, MA 01238

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

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

MJ KELLY
 Funeral Home



Established in 1808
 Family owned since 1872

3 Main Street • Lee, MA 01238
 413-243-0204

Your **Color Connection**
 Graphic Design & Printing Company

Ann M. LaBier
 Owner

Full Service Printing
 Graphic Design
 Laser Engraving

36 Pittsfield Road, Lenox, MA 01240
 ycc01240@aol.com 413-637-0500
 yourcolorconnection.com

Our printer of choice

Good People. Smart Service.



FORD'S
 Auto Service Inc.

1075 Fairview St., Lee, MA (413) 243-1107

FOOD & SPIRITS
 EST. 1991

LOCKER ROOM
 SPORTS PUB
 LEE, MA

Kitchen open 7 days a week 11am-9pm
 Daily and Weekly Specials
 13 TVs to watch your favorite sports event
 The Berkshire Eagle's 2022 Winner for "The Best Sports Bar"
 Call us to reserve your party or event

The Original Sports Pub of the Berkshires
 232 Main St. Lee, MA 413-243-2662


19 Main Street, Lee
 (413) 243-0136



Zabian's Clothing

Mike's Professional Barber Shop
 93 Main Street
 Lee, MA

Mike Eckert
 413-441-1245



Open Tuesday - Friday 8:00 - 2:00 and Saturday 8:00 - 2:00

Bartini Roofing Company
 290 Pleasant Street
 243-0570

Lee Bank
 75 Park Street
 243-0117

Lee Chamber of Commerce
 3 Park Place
 243-1705