



DECEMBER 2016

LEEDS LETTER

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Girls of the Mill River Button Company by Heidi Stevens

On display at Historic Northampton through December 18th is an art exhibit honoring the girls who worked the Leeds Mill River Button Factory. The show is an eclectic mix of work by Nancy Meagher and Elisa Lanzi inspired by the 1850s patched plaid dress on display at Historic Northampton and Elizabeth Sharpe's book, *In the Shadow of the Dam*. Meagher's endearing large scale drawings of three young women who worked at the mill, Carrie Bonnie, Annie Chamberlain and Sarah Shaughnessy have words creatively incorporated to give us a tender, more personal view of the girl's lives. It is impossible to separate the 1874 Mill River Flood from these girls. Annie's outstretched braids resemble waves. A single woman's boot of that period is on display next to the drawing of a factory girl who is missing one. Job titles are written on necklaces. Sarah's plaid dress is surrounded by buttons. Her necklace card says "Sorter." An assemblage depicting the aerial view of the Mill River after flood waters crashed through Leeds is constructed of a mish-mash of hundreds of sparkling-blue wood picks with tiny wooden furniture, plastic animals, and three plaid fabric-wrapped bundles tucked into the debris. The long curving sweep of blues tells the story of destruction and sudden loss. Meagher also has on display button covered lamps and a clock collaged with old maps of Leeds. Lanzi's series of monotype prints are a twenty first century take on dresses, patterns and motifs that were popular in the mid 1800s. Dress bodice sections are isolated or overlapped making them elegant, familiar shapes. The Girls of the Mill River Button Company exhibit takes a slice of Leeds history and makes it very accessible for all ages.



Presents for Leeds by Amy Stamm

Every winter the Leeds Civic Association organizes a pizza party and raffle to cheer up the neighborhood and benefit the Civic Association. One way you can help with this event is by doing a winter cleaning before or after Christmas and donating any new or almost-new items to the raffle. If you find something someone else in the neighborhood might love or you receive a gift that you cannot use, you can donate it to the Leeds Civic Association! If you knit, sew, or otherwise create items, those items are welcome, too. If you're a local business, please consider donating a gift certificate to the cause. The LCA crew of post-Christmas elves will artfully arrange items into themed baskets, and those attending the pizza party will purchase raffle tickets in hopes of winning one of the many prizes on display. Recycling gifts you don't need not only diverts items from the waste stream, but also benefits the many projects of the Leeds Civic Association, including the Historic Bridge Preservation Project, the Mulberry Street Garden Project, the Leeds newsletter, and the many neighborhood parties that take place throughout the year. For drop-off information, please call 585-9923.

Leeds Historical Signage coming this Spring by Heidi Stevens

Four 36 x 24 inch, tamper and graffiti proof interpretive signs depicting scenes from Leeds history will be printed and installed by next Spring. Historical photos and accompanying text will highlight the first mills in the village owned by Col. Shepherd, Leeds Center and Nonotuck Silk Company, the 1874 Mill River Flood, and the Leeds Mill River Button Company. There will be four smaller signs showing historical images of Cooks Dam, Dimock Mansion, the two hill top schools, Emery Wheel Works and the first school house. The angled signs will be installed on 3 foot high single posts at or near to the location from which the original photographs were taken. The aim is to transport the viewer back in time to the village's rich history. The Leeds Civic Association was awarded a grant for the project by the Northampton Community Preservation Act.

*****ECRWSS*****

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Mill Girls with Buttons, by Nancy Meagher, 2016

THROUGH DEC 18

**Girls of the Mill River Button Company
Art Exhibit - Historic Northampton**

UPCOMING LCA EVENTS

JANUARY 10, Tuesday, 7:00pm
LCA Monthly Meeting
Leeds School teacher's lounge

FEBRUARY 8, Wednesday, 7:00-8:15pm
Book Reading & Author's Signing
The Lost Village of Roberts Meadow
by John Clapp, Leeds resident
Leeds School Music Room

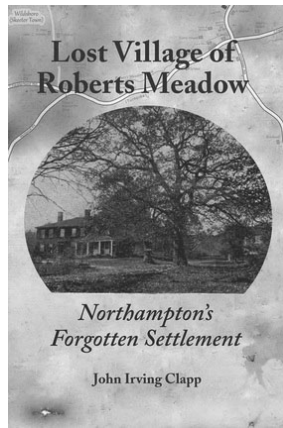
MARCH 25 Saturday, 4:30 - 8:30
**Beat the Winter Blues
raffle and pizza Party**
Northampton Country Club

LEEDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 114, Leeds, MA 01053
LeedsCivicAssoc@gmail.com
LeedsCivic.org

Lost Village of Robert's Meadow by John Clapp

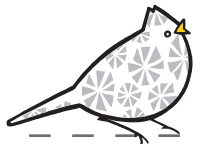
Book Reading & Author's Signing

On February 8, 2017 from 7:00-8:15pm in the Leeds School Music Room, Leeds author, John I. Clapp, will read from his latest book, *The Lost Village of Roberts Meadow: Northampton's Forgotten Settlement*. John will reveal the little known history of the small village of Robert's Meadow that was located in the northwest corner of Northampton on Kennedy, Sylvester and Chesterfield roads. John will read selected parts from his book, discussing some of the early history, industries and characters that inhabited this small community. These individuals include Colonel William Edwards who was the grandson of Jonathan Edwards, the famous and controversial minister of Northampton in the 1730s and 40s. Edward's large tannery helped put Northampton on the map by trading finished leather with Boston. Nathaniel Edwards III, cousin of William, owned Edward's Tavern, a popular stop-off for the stagecoach traveling the turnpike from Boston to Albany. Nathaniel Edwards III hosted a banquet for General Lafayette during his return tour of the United States in 1825. Another colorful character who frequented this tavern was Captain Elijah Ayers; his documented stunts included riding his horse into the bar as he called for a drink.



Ins and Outs of Parking

Here is some good information about the parking area at the old Look Restaurant on Route 9, now Seth Mias Catering. When the weather is nice, people often park there to access the bike trail or Look Park. There have been days when the lot has been packed with cars leaving limited space for employees and delivery trucks to park. This has led Seth, begrudgingly, to post No Parking signs and place planters along the entrance to ensure his employees have spaces. As far as Seth is concerned, he welcomes folks to use the lot when the no parking sign has been removed from the back left corner of the lot. Thanks, Seth!



The LCA wishes you and your family a Happy Holiday!

Please renew your LCA membership or become a new member soon!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

☐ I would like to receive my newsletter electronically.

☐ I would like my newsletter hand delivered.

☐ I would like my newsletter mailed (include additional \$4.50 for postage).

☐ I am interested in volunteering. Please contact me.

THE LEEDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION HAD A BUSY 2016!

- Trimmed Crabapple trees at Mulberry Street Garden
- Hosted Annual LCA Pizza and Raffle Party
- Applied for and was awarded a \$3,000 Community Preservation Act Grant for Leeds historical signage
- Researched content and designed eight Leeds historical interpretive signs
- Held Spring Litter Pick Up Day
- Helped petition for a traffic study on Main Street
- Awarded three LCA-Bradford Memorial educational scholarships
- Hosted Memorial Day Celebration at Memorial Park
- Held meeting with City officials to address summer abuse at dams and river
- Care for Mulberry Street Garden
- Maintain Flood Memorial site on Main Street
- Held Village Wide Tag Sale in June
- Posted small historical photographic signs on the bike trail railings
- Sponsored Saratoga Race Track summer bus trip
- Pulled over 200 pounds of trash, hundreds of bottles and cans from the shores of the Mill River
- Mowed edges of bike path north of Mulberry St.
- Planted wild flowers along new section of bike path
- Published ten LCA newsletters, maintained the LCA website
- Held Annual October Pumpkin Contest Party
- Held four Kids Summer Outdoor Movie Nights
- Filed the notice of intent, and application for CPA grant funding for the Wildlife Blind and nature trail at the Beaver Brook Conservation Area.
- Hosted Ice Cream Social on Main St. Green with free Mt. Tom's Ice Cream!
- Planted flowers in containers at Hotel Bridge's Main Street entrance
- Continue the campaign to restore Hotel Bridge to a walking bridge
- Met with new DPW director about Hotel Bridge restoration, roadside maintenance, advocated for No Parking signs at Cooks Dam
- Requested that the City plant shade trees on Main Street Green
- Had trails blazed red on the new section of Robert's Hill Conservation Area
- Strung holiday lights at Mulberry Street garden

THANK YOU LCA VOLUNTEERS!

New

☐

Renew

☐

\$10 Family Yearly Membership

☐☐

\$25 Business Yearly Membership

(1 year LCA website advertising, please enclose business card)

Additional Donation \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to: Leeds Civic Association

Mail to: P.O. Box 114, Leeds, MA 01053

Or pay online at: LeedsCivic.org

Thank you! Your membership helps keep our community connected!