



LEEDS LETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017

UPCOMING EVENTS 2017

FEBRUARY 8

Wednesday, 7:00-8:15pm

Book Reading & Author's Signing

The Lost Village of Robert's Meadow

by John Clapp

Leeds School Music Room

FEBRUARY 14

LCA Monthly meeting

Tuesday, 7:00 pm

Leeds School Teacher's Lounge

MARCH 25

Saturday, 4:30 - 8:30

Beat the Winter Blues Raffle and Pizza Party

Northampton Country Club

Book Reading and Signing - February 8th

The Lost Village of Robert's Meadow, by John Clapp

A terrific event to help beat the winter blues! You don't have to travel far and once there you will be transported back to the 1800s as you listen to John Clapp read selected parts from his newest book. John will discuss some of the early history, industries and characters that inhabited this small community. Please get settled in by 7:00pm. There will be a Q and A after the reading, and cider and cookies will be served. Come join your friends and neighbors in the Leeds School Music Room at 7:00pm, February 8th.

Charming Sight in Leeds - Heidi Stevens

I was making my morning coffee early one recent Sunday morning and saw a storybook scene from my window. It looked like a follow-the-leader-parade. For two participants the pace was perfect. At the helm was Amy Stamm bundled up for the morning chill jogging up the road, next in line was Plummy, her visiting rescue dog, and lagging behind in the rear and running just as fast as her little legs would take her was Wallace the cat. All three appeared to be thoroughly enjoying their morning outing together. Only in Leeds!

Sneak Peak - Leeds Historical Signage - Heidi Stevens

We look forward to the ground thawing so the eight signs that the LCA produced with funding from a Northampton Community Preservation Act grant can be installed along the Leeds-Mill River Greenway History Walk route. Historical photos and descriptive text will give the viewer a fuller understanding of Leeds robust manufacturing history during the 1800's and into the 1900s and the impact the 1874 Mill River flood had on the village. The Button Factory sign shown below includes an engraved illustration from Harper's Weekly June 6, 1874 that depicts the course of the Mill River through Leeds and the complete devastation the flood inflicted on the Button Factory on Main Street. Signs to the left show the an ice delivery to Lucius Dimock's mansion. (Dimock was the manager of the Nonotuck silk mill on Main Street), and Cook's Dam with the power station that provided electricity for the mills and electric trolley.



FIRST VEGETABLE IVORY BUTTONS IN THE U.S. MADE IN LEEDS

In 1858, INVENTOR AND INDUSTRIALIST, Alfred P. Crichtlow, transformed an old wooden mill on Main Street into the nation's first factory for vegetable ivory buttons. He imported 600-700 tons of Cocoon nuts per year from South America. Employees lathed, curved, etched and dyed the dried shell of the inner nut into fashionable buttons. Before the 1874 Mill River Flood, the mill employed 175 people and produced about 90,000 buttons per day.

This is the original wooden mill bought by Alfred Crichtlow in 1858 from the Northampton Woolen Co. He built the structure to its left in 1863. The original mill burned down 1910. Photo courtesy of Knoxville Bros., Forbes Library

The burned mill was replaced with a three-story brick building that had an overhead passageway leading to the wooden mill. A new brick dry-house was built in back. Crichtlow sold the mill to his son-in-law, George P. Warner, before the 1874 Flood. Photo courtesy of Knoxville Bros., Forbes Library

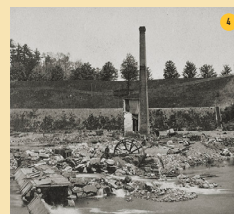
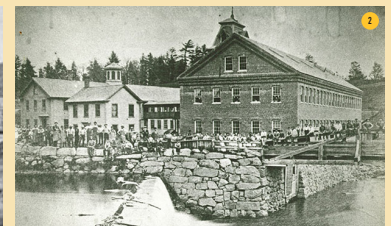
The 1874 Mill River Flood was a national calamity. The June issue of Harper's Weekly printed an engraving by John Gast showing the devastation in Leeds.

The 1874 flood destroyed all of the button factory buildings. Only the dry-house's chimney stack remained standing. Stairs that Crichtlow once used to get to and from work can be seen on the hill behind the site. These stairs provided an escape route to higher ground for those lucky enough to reach them before floodwaters hit. More than half of the Leeds flood victims were button mill employees. Photo courtesy of Knoxville Bros., Forbes Library

Men searched flood debris near the Main Street double arch bridge. Photo courtesy of Knoxville Bros., Forbes Library

The Springfield News Company postcard shows the rebuilt factory after the flood. By 1880 the Leeds button factory had doubled its manufacturing output.

In 1916 the mill was operated by the Corticelli Silk Co. Photo courtesy of Robert P. Banick, Forbes Library



Leeds Civic Association

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Appreciation for Wooded Trails in Leeds - Steve McDonough

Besides the great family neighborhood and the sense of community that make up our area, the biggest attraction to Leeds for me was the accessibility to great outdoor resources. We are all very lucky to have easy access to the bike path, swimming holes, and the many peaceful spots to view wildlife or slow down from a busy day.

Last summer was our first one here and it was great to see all the kids congregating, playing outside, or riding their bikes in the area. One thing that surprised me was the lack of interest (at least my kids) in exploring the adjacent woods. My fondest memories when I was a kid were definitely the days exploring trails, climbing trees, getting lost, and mucking around in rivers with my friends.

I discovered the small area of trails (some established and some neglected) north and east of Beaver Brook Loop. So far I've flagged the neglected trails and have done some minor clearing. Some ideas I have to get the kids out there would be an organized egg/scavenger hunt and/or fun outdoor education event (tree climbing, fort building, forest safety, etc.). If anyone has interest in helping clean up the trails, plan an event for the kids, or just get a tour of the lesser traveled trails, feel free to reach out to me at spmmic01@gmail.com.

Peaceful Green Tip - Amy Stamm

The pace of global warming is affected by actions small and large. One of human beings' most heinous ways of destroying the environment is through war. The U.S. Department of Defense is the largest consumer of fuel in the entire world. U.S. taxpayers pay for it to use over \$3 million worth of fuel every day, or over \$1.1 billion every year. With Air Force jets getting between .07 and .4 miles per gallon, Army tanks getting .6 miles per gallon, and cargo vehicles getting 1.2 miles per gallon, an armored division can use 600,000 gallons of fuel a day to operate. War also causes degradation of societal infrastructure that can wreak havoc on the environment by contaminating water supplies, mismanaging waste, creating poorly located landfill sites, and devastating biodiversity. Military explosives have caused unprecedented levels of deforestation and habitat destruction, and the refugee crises that grow out of wars have compounded this destruction by displacing hundreds of thousands of people at a time. Using only half the money the U.S. has spent on nuclear weapons, we could have eliminated starvation and provided full health care across the world, eliminated illiteracy, provided clean water and fully sustainable energy to all countries, stopped deforestation, housed every U.S. resident, paid for every U.S. college student, and prevented global warming.

Creating a New Trail System and Wildlife Blind in Leeds

Northampton Community Preservation Act funds were awarded to Broad Brook Coalition and Leeds Civic Association to rehabilitate and improve a 6-acre tract within the Beaver Brook/Broad Brook Conservation Area that lies between Haydenville Road (Rte 9) and Beaver Brook in Leeds. The project will create a passive recreation area that will include: a central area with picnic tables, interpretive signboards describing the cultural and natural history of the site, establishment of low-impact trails to provide access to interesting features of the project site, an informational kiosk near the parking area, and a timber framed wildlife viewing blind made from locust trees milled on site will be erected near Beaver Brook.

In the coming year there will be many opportunities to help establish the trails and clear invasive species including bittersweet, Japanese knotweed and numerous woody invasives. For more information about the Broad Brook project contact Jason Johnson at cookjohnson@comcast.net.

