

Lancaster Historical Commission

The members were: Michael Sczerzen, Chair, Heather Maurer Lennon Vice Chair, Joy Peach, Sally Rouleau, Karen Silverthorn, Mark Schryver, and Jean Watson and Associate Members: Catherine Chaisson and Joan Richards. The Commission accepted with regret the resignation of Liz Colley in June 2012, from the Commission after 14 years of service. Karen Silverthorn was appointed by the Board of Selectmen to fill the vacancy. Karen had been an associate member up until the time of her appointment to full member.

The Historical Commission would like to take the opportunity to remember two of our past members who died in the fall of 2012:

- David Knott, who was a professor emeritus at Atlantic Union College, died September 21, 2012. David had served on the Historical Commission from 1990 to 2008.
- Phyllis Farnsworth died October 10, 2012. Phyllis had served as Chair for 26 years of her 30 years (1964– 1994) on the Historical Commission.

Their contributions to the town were numerous and they are greatly missed.

The Commission members thank the following persons who have adopted a historic marker in town and taken responsibility for the area surrounding the markers:

- Jean and James Watson - Lover's Lane Old Elm Tree on Center Bridge Road
- Liz and Tom Colley - Ward Park water trough and intersection
- Cemetery Dept. - Water trough at North Village
- Michael Sczerzen and Joan Richards - Lane's Crossing Water Trough
- Joanne Foster and Alexandra Turner - water trough at the intersection of Center Bridge Road, Neck Road, and Main Street

Anyone interested in adopting a marker, please contact the Historical Commission at LancasterHistoricalCommission@yahoo.com and telephone number 978-365-3909. Thank you to Sue Billings and Corinne Walker of the Lancaster Garden Club for coordinating other areas in town. The Historical Commission encourages all town agencies to maintain planting with appropriate landscapes that enhance the historical buildings around the Town Green.

The Commission office is presently located at 94 Main Street (the Philbin Building). The rear entrance is easiest to access the office. Heather Lennon, Vice Chair, and Michael Sczerzen, Chair, have coordinated the office layout. Heather Lennon is also acting as Office Coordinator, organizing, preparing and archiving materials. The dedication of some of the Historical Commission members and two senior tax abatement workers, and two volunteers, Marcia Firth and Carol Brown, are assisting is much appreciated. In total, no less than 883 volunteer hours have been recorded for 2012.

The Historical Commission continues to answer requests for genealogy and other research. Appointments can be scheduled for interested individuals to do onsite research. The office is also open most Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Many items pertaining to Lancaster are for sale. The Commission co-sponsors some of the yearly four programs of the Lancaster Historical Society.

The Historical Commission had two volunteers assist the 150th Celebration Committee of Thayer Memorial Library and many hours of research were done by Heather Lennon, volunteer Maribeth Eugene of the Historical Society, and Joan Richards. The Thayer Library's 150th

historical program arranged by the Lancaster Historical Society held in February presented by Warren Rasmussen on Mary Rowlandson was very well attended.

Throughout the winter and spring Maud Ayson of Freedom's Way worked with the Lancaster Historical Commission and the Historical Society to provide information and for the Lancaster venue for the *Rollin' 'n Strollin'* held May 5th on the Town Green. We thank our sponsors for the event Kimball Farms and Worker's Credit Union who provided funds for the pamphlets published for the public. Also, many organizations throughout the town participated in this very successful event.

Two granite markers identifying the Old Common and Middle Cemeteries, given to the Town as a gift from the Historical Society, were completed and installed. The dedication, on October 21, 2012, was open to the public. We thank Historical Society President Michael Sczerzen and Society members for seeing the project to completion and to John (Sandy) Foster, retired DPW Supt., for his assistance in the approval process.

The Historical Commission supported the efforts regarding:

- Prescott Building - The Historical Commission has continued to meet in 2012 with Menders, Torrey & Spencer, Inc. the architects selected for preparation of a feasibility study for the rehabilitation/reuse of the Prescott Building (Center School) as is part of the Town's Master Plan. The Historical Commission thanks Orlando Pacheco, Town Administrator, and Noreen Piazza, Planning Director, for their assistance at two hearings and allowing one scheduled open houses and one as part of the 150th celebration in September of the Prescott Building. A number of the Historical Commission members spent numerous hours cleaning up the interior on all levels.
- At the October Special Town Meeting, the Town approved a warrant article seeking support of moving forward with the restoration and a request for the Town to seek a bond for the work of approximately \$3,000,000. The Finance Committee also gave their approval to the warrant article, and the vote passed with more than two-thirds in favor. We thank the townspeople for the opportunity to do something significant for the preservation of this building (the only vacant building) on the town green. More information will be provided in early 2013 regarding the approved proposal.
- The Historical Commission has been working with the Conservation Commission and the town administrator, Orlando Pacheco, regarding the removal of the Bartlett Pond Dam. The two turbines are to be refurbished and erected with historical signage to commemorate the last dam site where power supplied the factory at that location energy to do business until the mid-1930.
- First Church of Christ Lancaster – The Commission will continue to work with the church Standing Committee Chair, Frank Streeter and the Town Clock Winder, John Spencer, to pursue a plan to keep the Town Clock preserved and working well.

Changes in Town:

- The Dr. J. L.S. Thompson house c. 1849 at 2 Neck Road, presently owned by Dr. Norman Wendth family, was damaged in the fall by a fire, in the kitchen area, and is still under restoration and vacant at this time.
- The house at 1357 Main Street (c. 1895, John Taylor Goddard House) which was vacant for many years, has been demolished and the footprints are being used to construct a new four-family dwelling.

Accessions: 2012 Accessions

The Commission received donations from: Warren Arnold, Marilyn Chambers, Pete Christoph, Ginny and Frank Collins, Phyllis Farnsworth, Marcia Firth, Elaine Mudgett, Tom Murray, Sally Rouleau, Heather Lennon, Michael Sczerzen, and Jean Watson. A complete listing of the donations can be obtained at the Historical Commission Office