

2013 Annual Report – 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, Joan Richards and Garrett Sheahan.

The LHC wishes to thank the following persons who have adopted a historic marker in town and have taken responsibility for maintaining each:

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

Anyone interested in adopting a marker, may contact the Historical Commission at LancasterHistoricalCommission@yahoo.com or at (978) 365-3909. Thank you to Sue Billings and Corinne Walker of the Lancaster Garden Club for coordinating other areas in town. The LHC encourages all town agencies to maintain plantings with appropriate landscape material that will enhance the historical buildings around the Town Green.

The LHC office is presently located at 94 Main Street (the Philbin Building). The rear entrance is easiest to access the office. Michael Sczerzen, Chair, and Heather Lennon, Vice Chair, have coordinated the office layout. Heather Lennon is also acting as Office Coordinator, organizing, preparing and archiving materials. The dedication of LHC members and two senior tax abatement workers who are assisting is much appreciated. No less than 2,000 volunteer hours have been recorded for 2013.

The LHC continues to respond to requests for genealogy and other town-related queries. Appointments can be scheduled for to do onsite research by calling (978) 365-3909. The office is open most Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Many items pertaining to Lancaster's history are available for purchase. Further, the LHC co-sponsors some of the yearly programs of the Lancaster Historical Society.

A grant from the Massachusetts Sesquicentennial Committee of the American Civil War was sought and awarded to Lancaster to erect a marker at 408 Vista Avenue, Eastwood Cemetery this lot was a gift from Col. John Thayer to the Washburn Post 93. It may now be used for any local military veteran without means who wants to be interred there.

In 2013 the LHC lead efforts regarding:

- **Prescott Building** -- The Commission's diligent lead successfully brought a warrant article to Annual Town Meeting. The ballot vote at the May 8th meeting passed allowing the town to move forward with a bond issue to restore the building. The Prescott Building had been vacant for 13 years and the LHC worked with the architects on the conceptual plan to house the LHC in the top floor. A complication resulted in the town not filing the necessary paperwork with the bond lawyers soon enough. Another warrant article was required for the special Town Meeting October 28th. The vote on the article again passed by an overwhelming two-thirds majority vote. Two open houses were held in 2013. The first was on October 5th during the Thayer Memorial Library Civil War celebration on the Town Green. The second was held on October 31 in conjunction with the town's first Halloween festival. The LHC wishes to thank Orlando Pacheco, Town Administrator, Noreen Piazza, Planning Director, and, Lancaster residents for

their strong support in moving the town forward to “Complete the Green” for more effective use.

In 2013, the LHC supported:

- **Bartlett Pond Dam** -- The LHC has been working with the Conservation Commission and town administrator, Orlando Pacheco, regarding the removal of the Bartlett Pond Dam. Plans are to have both turbines refurbished and erected with historical signage to commemorate this last dam site in Lancaster where water power was utilized to run the machinery.
- **First Church of Christ, Unitarian** -- The LHC continues to work with the church Standing Committee and town appointed clockwinder John Spencer to pursue a plan to keep the Town Clock preserved and maintained.

Changes in Town:

- The Dr. J. L.S. Thompson house c. 1849 at 2 Neck Road, presently owned by Dr. Norman Wendth, was damaged in the fall of 2011 by a fire, in the kitchen area, and is still under restoration.
- The Oliver Baldwin house c. 1800 at 2121 North Main Street was taken for taxes and the LHC was given access to tour the building. A public auction will be scheduled in 2014.
- The building at 57 East George Hill Road called the “Little Book House Museum” once owned by historian Herbert Hosmer was dismantled in October and will be reassembled in some form in New York state.
- The building at 800 Main Street formerly the Lancaster Bank, later the Center Hose House and most recently the town Ambulance Building will be sold. The LHC has concern that its re-use be appropriate as it is located in the Center Village District which is on the National Historical Register.

ACCESSIONS 2013

Donations -- The LHC received donations from:

Warren Arnold, Marilyn Chambers, John Evans, Marcia Firth, Nat Hawkins, Wayne Hazen, Walt Holmes, Heather Lennon, Elaine Mudgett, Doris Coughlin Lamb, Frank Mitchell, Tom Murray, Joy Peach, Jennifer Schmidt Poulin, Sally Rouleau, David Ross, Michael Sczerzen, Stow Historical Society, Julie Thayer Williams, and Jean Watson. A complete listing of the donations can be viewed at the Commission Office.

Purchases -- The LHC purchased:

2 different sets of the History of Worcester County from: John Schmacher- Hardy.

7 items of items of historical value to Lancaster from: John-Schumacher-Hardy. A complete listing of these items can be viewed at the Commission Office. This purchase was made in conjunction with a large purchase made by the Lancaster Historical Society.