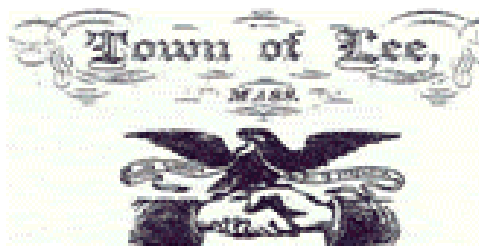


Lee Historical Society Newsletter

Vol. 7, No. 7



July 2010

Lee Historical Society, Inc.

P. O. Box 170

Lee, MA 01238

www.leehistoricsociety.homestead.com

The July Meeting of the Lee Historical Society will be held on **Thursday, July 8, starting at 6:30** in the **cafeteria of the Senior Center in Crossways Village**. This will be a **business meeting** for board members, officers, and committee members and any interested members. There will be discussions on fundraisers that will be coming up and samples of our new 2010 Commemorative Mug will be displayed. This year the mug will have a replica of the Lee Library on it.

Thanks go out to Anne Lostrangio for the first edition book, "The Berkshire Hills", that she so kindly donated to the Society and to **Gert Fresia**, for the old newspapers and articles of Lee that she also donated to the Society. Thanks ladies, they are appreciated.

The first annual scholarship winner:

I am pleased to announce the winner of the first annual scholarship of the Lee Historical society to be Kathryn (Katie) Mary Eckert. Katie, daughter of Ed and Nancy, and sister to Ryan and Michael have been members of our society for the past six years. Katie graduated from Lee High School with a GPA of 3.7 and was on the honor roll for all semesters in her four years. She was a member of the National Honors Society and an advisor for the National Junior Honors society, and was the producer of Lee Live, a TV show that was aired on CTSB. She was a member of SADD, Helping Hands and Peer Education. As an athlete, Katie played soccer, basketball and softball in each of her four years and was a captain on each team. This past year's basketball team won the Massachusetts Division III Championship in March. She was selected as Berkshire County Girls Basketball MVP, Western Mass Division III Tournament MVP and received the Most Outstanding Player Award in the Western Mass All-Star Game. Katie also played AAU basketball for the Mass-Frenzy from Springfield and participated in the Bay State Games with the Western Mass team that were the Gold Medal Winners in 2009. She is spending her summer by working at Lucky's Ice Cream and Grill, in Lee, and at Tanglewood, in Lenox. She is also volunteering as an assistant coach with the AAU Frenzy team. This fall she will be entering Western New England College to study education, and yes, she will be playing basketball. As Katie is our granddaughter, I am especially proud to be writing this article and wish her the best of luck in the next step of her life.

Look for us in the park on July 31st at the **Craft Fair and Festival in the Park**, hosted by The First Congregational Church. Stop by, browse our items, or just talk about the history of our quaint and history filled town. We will have our newest item, the third in a series of mugs, that will have a replica of the Lee Library on it. Hope to see you there!

THIS IS A BIT SCARY!

Copied from the 1911 Annual Town Report:

Meat and Milk Inspector's Report

Examined in fall inspection 1,034 head of meat sock, 765 hogs, 294 sheep and 3 goats, Found two cases of tuberculosis in cows, one was killed and found to be very bad, the other one was subjected to tuberculin test, reacted to 105, was killed in slaughter house and found to have tuberculosis in both lungs in a mild way, I as inspector for town would not stamp it, so it was shipped out to town of Great Barrington, by order of an agent of Cattle Bureau. *(I wonder who had the pleasure of eating this beef?)

Through the past summer I was called by two different parties having cows which looked suspicious to me. I quarantined same. The state agent killed one of these and passed the other which I tested with tuberculin four days after and she gave a definite reaction, was again quarantined, and this time found to be badly tuberculosis.

Have found one tuberculosis carcass in licensed slaughter house which was buried and one tuberculosis carcass butchered by farmer that was buried. At present have a herd of cows in quarantine for Blackleg, two of the animals having died.

March 10, 1911

Dr. J. H. McAllister, Inspector

Recollections VII

By U. S. Navy Retired Commander Vic Mottarella,
A native of Lee

(Continued from the June-10 issue)

Fifteen Days Leave

John and I wanted to stay together if at all possible. We requested to be assigned to the Quonset Point, Naval Air Station in Rhode Island since that was the closest Navy Air Base to our homes in Massachusetts. Instead, our orders dated August 3, 1946 directed us to report to the Commander Air Force Atlantic Fleet (ComAirLant) in Norfolk, Virginia for further assignment to duty involving flying. We were to report to ComAirLant prior to 2400 on 23 August. We were allowed to delay for fifteen days and such time was to count as leave. John and I packed all our belongings into our not so trusty (anymore) Chevrolet and headed north. As we proceeded north the pounding of the engine became incrementally louder and the steering left a lot to be desired. We went through a fair size town in Georgia that happened to have a red light. At that point the highway made a ninety-degree turn to the left but the steering mechanism would only turn about ten degrees in that direction. No problem for right turns. This situation was good enough for normal highway driving but not in this case. We solved the immediate problem by proceeding straight ahead and going around the block making right turns. The pounding of the engine was so bad that when we reached some town in North Carolina we decided to find a station where we could remove the oil pan and investigate. I had purchased numerous tools prior to leaving Miami. We removed the pan and found that one of the six bearings on the connecting rods was very loose and that was the cause of the knocking. These were all poured bearings made of babbitt metal. I dreamed up the brilliant idea of filing the cap of the loose bearing to reduce the amount of play. The fact that this would cause the bearing to no longer be perfectly round was of secondary concern based on our overall predicament. At that point we didn't have anything to lose because the engine was about to meet its demise. After doing this we started the engine without the oil pan on to see if it had quieted down – it seemed much better. Of course, we were

running it without oil but this was just a test case. We put the pan back on, added oil and hit the road. The noise gradually increased and somewhere in Maryland it locked up. At that point John, who was fully disgusted, decided to disassociate himself from ownership in the car. He took the next available bus to his hometown of Taunton, Massachusetts. I stayed with the car and discussed remedial actions that might take place with a station attendant. I was told that work could not be performed until the next day and that it might take a few days for repairs to be completed. Regrettably, I too had to take a bus back to Lee, Massachusetts. About four days later I called Maryland to check on the car and they told me it would be ready by the next day. I returned and picked up the car. It ran but was still making a lot of noise. I was able to coax it back to Lee by driving very slowly. When my mechanic friend, Paul Naventi, examined it he said the engine was not worth repairing. Based on the history that I revealed he surmised that the crankshaft had been bent as a result of swallowing a valve. Instead, he suggested that it would be much more cost effective by replacing the engine with one from a junkyard. He found a good one in Tyringham, Mass. (about 3 miles from Lee) and installed it in sufficient time to allow me to check in at ComAirLant in Norfolk on schedule. That engine never failed me until I finally got rid of the car. Paul also greatly improved the steering mechanism by making numerous adjustments. In accordance with our orders John and I reported to the Commander Air Force Atlantic Fleet at Norfolk on August 23, 1946. We remained there until September 10th at which time we received an endorsement to our orders that directed us to proceed immediately to Naval Air Station, Oceana, Virginia and report to the Commanding Officer, Bombing and Fighting Squadron Three. Oceana was located about four miles west of Virginia Beach and only about fifteen miles from Norfolk. We learned later that we were replacement pilots for two who were killed in a midair collision flying F6F Hellcats about a week earlier.

RECOLLECTIONS VIII

Air Group Three

(Becoming Fleet Aviators)

John and I were assigned to Air Group 3. The Air Group was composed of four squadrons. Fighter Squadron 3 (VF-3) was a fighter squadron flying Hellcats. I should mention here that Commander Jimmie Thatch and Lieutenant Butch O'Hare who played major rolls in the battles of Coral Sea and Midway had been members of this squadron.

Bombing and Fighting Squadron 3 (VBF-3), the squadron to which John and I were assigned had, as indicated by the title, a dual mission. During the first two months we carried out both missions with Hellcats. Bombing Squadron 3 (VB-3) was a dive-bombing squadron flying Curtis Helldivers and Torpedo Squadron 3 (VT-3) flew the Grumman TBF Avenger, a torpedo-bomber.

I have been asked several times what significance the letter V has in preceding the squadron type. I have been told that the V according to early Naval Aviation parlance signifies heavier than air while the letter Z signifies lighter than air such as would be used for blimp and dirigible squadrons. The Navy tends to hold on to tradition so we are still naming fighter squadrons with the VF logo.

Each of the above four squadrons was led by a commanding officer with the rank of Lt. Commander while the Air Group Commander was a full Commander. The second in command of each squadron was a Lt. Commander with "date of rank" junior to the commanding officer. His title was Executive Officer.

Our Commanding Officer was a Southerner from North Carolina named Frank Lawlor. For a Commanding Officer he impressed me as being rather quiet but always a complete gentleman. I did not know until some time later that he was a volunteer and member of the famous Flying Tigers who fought the Japanese long before the United States entered the war. I heard several tales about him while in the squadron but none of these stories originated with him. He was just too modest.

His wingman mentioned a memorable experience when they were both assigned to another squadron during the war. While on a mission in the Pacific they spotted a Japanese twin engine Bomber at a distance but could not engage in hostilities because they were very low on fuel. Lawlor turned his plane towards the bomber and elevated the nose to adjust his guns for maximum distance and fired off a quick burst with his machine guns. The bomber was last seen smoking as it passed out of sight.

A few months ago Lawlor's name appeared in the National Geographic magazine and as I recall he was credited with ranking second in the Flying Tigers for having shot down the most Japanese planes. The number of planes was not mentioned. I never knew any of this during the period I was attached to the squadron. It was mentioned among the pilots that he shot down about 9 aircraft after he rejoined the American Fleet at the start of World War II but I have no way to verify this. Judging by his character and his skill as a Naval Aviator I would not be surprised if he let other pilots in his squadron take credit for most of his kills.

I flew with him numerous times as his wingman when first assigned to the squadron. I can remember trying to impress him on one flight by flying in extremely close formation but it was disappointing because he only looked straight ahead or in the cockpit and hardly ever looked over at me flying about three feet off his right wing. During the debriefing the absence of accolades was duly noted by this young Ensign.

(Continued to the August –10 issue)

DID YOU KNOW?

These are articles found in the book "The Berkshire Hills". If anyone has any additional information to any of these articles, the society and members would be happy to hear about them.

During the Civil War, Federal authorities discovered that one of the Lee paper mills was making paper watermarked "C.S.A." A Mr. Linn, who manufactured bank-note paper, was summoned before the District Court in Boston to interpret the letters, which might stand for Confederate States of America. This Mr. Linn was either a very ingenious man or a great patriot. According to his explanation, he was carrying out orders given to him by a group of Union sympathizers, who were planning to flood the South with huge quantities of counterfeit Confederate bills. The value of the Confederate currency would thus be destroyed and the war would be over. The case was postponed to the next sitting of the court and apparently was never tried. Mr. Linn disappeared from the area and the truth of this story remains a mystery.

From East Lee is said to have come the phrase "pot luck" as applied to a delectable New England boiled dinner. A town historian, the Reverend L. S. Rowland, speaks of it asthe most satisfying dish for the men who spent long hours in outside labor. It is interesting to note that corned beef and cabbage is not as generally supposed, a dish brought from Ireland by early immigrants. They did not arrive here until about 1850 and "pot luck" was well-known in 1791, in the town of Lee which was settled by Cape Cod people mostly.

In 1938, The Corned Beef and Cabbage Club" was organized in Lee and the purpose of "sociability and the enjoyment of good food."

Officers of the Lee Historical Society for the year of 2010

President – Gary W. Allen – 413-243-2140 or garywallen@earthlink.net
Vice- President – Ethel Noonan – 413-243-0263
Treasurer – Mal Eckert – 413-243-1797 or MalEckert@msn.com
Secretary – Bambi Johndrow – 413-243-2845 or disdeer62@netzero.net

Board of Directors of the Lee Historical Society

Marion Leach/2010	William Clarke/2010	Mary Morrissey/2011
Peg Biron/2011	Josh Hall/2011	Matt MacNyar/2011
JoAnn Zarnoch/2012	Maria Hopkins/2012	Robert Kelly/2012

Immediate-Past President and Board Member – Stephen Cozzaglio
Society Historian – Charlotte Davis
Newsletter Editor – Mal Eckert

The Society is always looking for articles and small pieces of information to print about Lee. If you have anything that you would like to share with our readers or any questions that some one might know the answer to, please let us know. Please let the Society know if there is a specific subject that you might be interested to hear about as we are all interested in learning more about the history of Lee.

The Lee Historical Society has the following items for sale. Any one of these would make a great gift for an out of town friend or relative.

- (1.) Picture Packet – Six, 8” x 10” colored prints of “Old Lee” for \$10.00 each or 3 packets for \$25.00, plus \$2.50 if they need to be shipped.
- (2.) Refrigerator magnets – (approx. 2” x 3”). Three are of old street scenes from the early 1900’s and one is an “Entering Lee” replica sign. They are \$3.00 each or buy a set of three of your choice for \$7.50 with no shipping charges.
- (3.) Cookbook – “Boiling Water” – a 400 recipe cookbook, put together by the ladies of the society for \$10.00, plus \$3.50 if shipped.
- (4.) “Historical Lee” – a tribute to the late Betty Dennis. A seventy-three page book containing the articles that Betty wrote between April 1971 and August 1977 that appeared in the Penny Saver. Price is \$10.00, plus \$2.50 if shipped.
- (5.) “Third Strike”- a book, the last of three written by Ralph W. Smith that was published in 1984. It contains stories of people and tales of earlier days in Lee. The price is \$15.00, plus \$2.50 if shipped.
- (6.) Commemorative Mugs.
 - (a.) A 2008, #1 in our series, mug with a replica of Memorial Hall embossed on the side.
 - (b.) A 2009, #2 in our series, mug with a replica of Central Fire Station embossed on the side.
 - (c.) A 2010, #3 in our series, mug with a replica of the Lee Library embossed on the side.These mugs can be purchased for \$10.00 each, plus \$3.00 shipping or two mugs for \$18.00 and \$5.00 shipping or all three mugs for \$27.00 and \$7.00 for shipping.

Please send me (amount) _____ of (item/items) _____

Enclosed is my check for (no cash please) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

**Mail to:
Lee Historical Society
P. O. Box 170
Lee, MA 01238**

Please support our "Business Members" that support us.

Bartini Roofing Company
290 Pleasant Street
Lee, MA 01238

Ben's Shop
68 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

Charles Flint Antiques
52 Housatonic Street
Lenox, MA 01240

Greylock Federal Union
47 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

Quality Plus
260 Chestnut Street
Lee, MA 01238

L. V. Toole Insurance Agency
195 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

Sullivan Station Restaurant
Railroad Street
Lee, MA 01238

Paperdilly, Inc.
74 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

Dresser Hull Company
60 Railroad Street
Lee, MA 01238

Robert M. Kelly, Paperhanging
South Prospect Street
Lee, MA 01238

Kelly Funeral Home
3 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

The Jonathon Foote 1778 House
1 East Street
Lee, MA 01238

Morgan House Restaurant & Pub
33 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

Lee Bank
75 Park Street
Lee, MA 01238

Devonfield Inn
85 Stockbridge Road
Lee, MA 01238

Hunter & Graziano P. C.
10 Park Place
Lee, MA 01238

Myron's Call
49 Fuller Street
Lee, MA 01238

Locker Room Sports Pub
232 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

Monk's Professional Barber Shop
91 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

Frank Consolati Ins. Agency
71 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

How about becoming a member to help support our Society? Do you have an out of town friend or relative that might enjoy our newsletters? Sign him/her up as a member.

Student Membership - \$5.00 Senior Membership (one person over the age of 65) - \$5.00
Business Membership - \$25.00 Individual Membership (one person under the age of 65) - \$10.00
Family Membership (All members of one family living at home) - \$15.00

Please circle one: Student Senior Individual Family Business/Corporate

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Telephone _____ **Email** _____

Is this a renewal membership? _____

Would you be interested in serving on a committee? _____

Or helping out at one of our fundraisers? _____

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P. O. Box 170
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