



# The Acorn

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NEWSLETTER OF THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Volume VIII Number IV

[www.ledyardhistory.org](http://www.ledyardhistory.org)

February 2012

## **The Miller's Tale** **February meeting to feature Ledyard's** **unique up-down sawmill**

Time was when every community of any substance had a sawmill. Particularly in New England, trees, the raw materials for building, were plentiful and the streams provided water power to operate machinery. It made sense to cut, saw and use the timber all in the same area. The 1868 xxx map of Ledyard shows no fewer than six sawmills, along with several grist mills and shingle mills.

Nearly all the neighborhood water-powered sawmills are gone now, but Ledyard is fortunate to have a very rare example of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century "up-down" mill, the only one known to be operating with its original machinery on its original site. Owned by the town and administered by the Historic District Commission, the mill is operated during the spring and fall by a dedicated group of volunteers.

At our **February 14<sup>th</sup>** meeting, sawmill volunteers Alan Ganong and Warren Dolphin will discuss the history of the Ledyard up-down sawmill, and explain the workings and technology of our mill and other early sawmills in New England's past. The meeting will be held at the **Bill Library in Ledyard**, beginning at **7:00 PM**. The Bill Library is located at **718 Colonel Ledyard Highway**. Please come and bring a friend.

For further information on the Ledyard up-down sawmill visit the mill's website, [www.ledyardsawmill.org](http://www.ledyardsawmill.org), or see it on Facebook: [facebook.com/ledyardsawmill](https://facebook.com/ledyardsawmill)

## **Can You Tell Tales Out of School?** **April meeting a forum on one-room schools**

Until 1949, Ledyard had 14 school districts, all but one with its own school. Most of these taught eight grades in a single room with one teacher. Remarkably, of the 13 schools, nine survive, although not all in Ledyard. This is thought to be a record for the entire state. A majority of survivors have been re-purposed as dwellings or business offices, but three are preserved or restored in their original form and can be seen by appointment.

At our April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting the Society will hold a forum on one- (and two-) room schoolhouses. The program will begin with a short presentation on Ledyard's schools by town historian Kit Foster. Following the presentation, the forum will be opened to all who wish to participate, to share their memories of this form of elementary education or simply to ask questions.

The meeting will be held at **the Ledyard Senior Center on Tuesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **7:00 PM**. The Senior Center is located at **12 Van Tassel Drive** in Gales Ferry.

## Mark Your Calendar

**Tuesday, February 14, 2012:** Membership meeting, Ledyard's Up-Down Sawmill, Bill Library, 7:00 PM.

**Tuesday, March 13, 2012:** Executive Board meeting, Bill Library, 7:00 PM.

**Tuesday, April 10, 2012:** Membership meeting, Ledyard Senior Center, 7:00 PM.  
**Tales Out of School.** Join fellow Ledyard residents, many of whom attended Ledyard's one- (or two-) room schools, in a forum about education in the by-gone era..

**Saturday, April 28, 2012:** Grandma's Attic Community Tag Sale, Nathan Lester House, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM – rain date May 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Tuesday, May 8, 2012:** Executive Board, Bill Library, 7:00 PM.

**Tuesday, June 12, 2012:** Annual Meeting, Pot-Luck, reports and elections. Watch this space for time and place.

**REMEMBER**, the Nathan Lester House is available for use by small groups of up to 35 people. Contact caretakers Scott and Andrea Buka at 464-8540, or email [nathanlesterhouse@yahoo.com](mailto:nathanlesterhouse@yahoo.com) for more information or for tours out of season.

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## *The Acorn*

MIGHTY OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW

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## What's in your attic?

### Bring it to the community tag sale

Do you need to indulge in some spring cleaning? Do you have interesting items in your attic or your garage? They may be just what we need for our Grandma's Attic Community Tag Sale, to be held Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at the Nathan Lester House.

You can rent a table for \$25.00, and sell your own things. Or you can donate items to the Historical Society table, where the proceeds will go toward preserving Ledyard history.

Donations to the Historical Society's table will be taken in at the Nathan Lester House at the following times: Friday, April 20 from 9:00 – 11:00 AM and 5:00 – 7:00 PM.; Saturday, April 21 and Sunday, April 22 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM; Monday April 23, Wednesday April 25, and Friday April 27 from 9:00 – 11:00 AM and 5:00 – 7:00 PM. Sadly, we are unable to accept the following items: stuffed animals, pillows, cosmetics and toiletries, clothing and shoes, small appliances, or mattresses.

Volunteers are needed to help sort and price items on Saturday, April 21 and 22, and Friday, April 27; and to work the sale on Saturday, April 28. Please contact Andrea Buka to volunteer by email at [events@ledyardhistory.org](mailto:events@ledyardhistory.org) or by calling 860-464-8540. Space reservation forms are available from Andrea, or at [www.ledyardhistory.org](http://www.ledyardhistory.org).

**Grandma's Attic Community Tag Sale  
Saturday, April 28, 2012, 9:00 AM – 3:00  
PM (Rain date May 5<sup>th</sup>). Nathan Lester  
House, Long Cove and Vinegar Hill  
Roads, Gales Ferry.**

## Scholarship Applicants Sought

For the past two years the Society has awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating senior from Ledyard High School. The Society has voted to present a similar award to a graduate of the LHS Class of 2012.

To be eligible, a student must have plans to attain a college degree, and have participated in community or extracurricular activities. Applications may be obtained from the Ledyard High School Guidance Office, or downloaded from the Historical Society website:

<http://ledyardhistory.org/assets/LHS%20Scholarship%20Application.pdf>

The deadline is April 15, 2012.

## More Ledyard History Coming Volume VI to be available soon

The latest volume in the Society's Ledyard History series, *Quakertown*, will soon be available for purchase. Devoted to the Quakertown section of Ledyard and its Rogerene residents, the book is in a format familiar to readers of recent volumes. Taking a genealogical approach, it traces the families, their activities and their homes, during their residency in Ledyard. Priced at \$20.00, it will be available for purchase at Ledyard's libraries and on the order page of the Ledyard History website:

<http://ledyardhistory.org/publications>

## Highlights from Recent Society Meetings

### Executive Board, September 13, 2011

The Board met at the Nathan Lester House. Present were Vice President Ellen Fossum, Treasurer Nancy Avery, Secretary Lee

Moore, Publications Chair Rusty Godino and Members at Large Vin Godino and Andrea Buka.

- Andrea reported that the Star Gazing program, canceled because of storm Irene, will be rescheduled next summer.
- Plans were made for a cookie swap at the December membership meeting.
- Rusty announced that Volume VI of Ledyard history is being proofread.
- It was announced that Scott and Andrea Buka have renewed their lease as caretakers at the Nathan Lester House.

### Membership Meeting, October 11, 2011

The meeting was held at the Bill Library. Present were President Kit Foster, Vice President Ellen Fossum, Secretary Lee Moore, Treasurer Nancy Avery, Publications Chair Rusty Godino, Members at Large Vin Godino and Jeanne Allyn, and a good representation of members and guests.

- Kit announced the publication of a book, *The Forgotten Chapters: A Personal Quest to Uncover Lost Ancestors*, by Kate Dimanescu, a Society member and a descendant of Ledyardite William Williams.
- Members present approved by-laws changes to enable the new six-meeting annual format, by unanimous vote.

Following adjournment, historian Dan DeLuca presented a lecture on "The Old Leather Man," a mysterious figure who walked a monthly circuit through western Connecticut and eastern New York during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

## **Executive Board, November 8, 2011**

The meeting was held at the Bill Library. Present were President Kit Foster, Vice President Ellen Fossum, Treasurer Nancy Avery, Secretary Lee Moore and Member at Large Vin Godino

There being no quorum, action on meeting minutes was postponed.

- Plans were finalized for the Yule Celebration to be held December 4 at the Nathan Lester House.
- It was decided to screen some classic holiday television shows at the December 13 membership meeting and cookie swap.
- The Society budgeted \$1,000 for a scholarship to a graduating senior from Ledyard High School. Applications will be requested in the spring.
- A tag sale, "Grandma's Attic," was suggested as a fund-raising project. Time, place and logistics will be investigated.
- A contingency plan will be formulated for contacting Society officers, chairs and members when normal channels are disrupted, as in recent storm Irene.

## **Membership Meeting, December 13, 2011**

The meeting was held at the Bill Library. Present were President Kit Foster, Vice President Ellen Fossum, Secretary Lee Moore, Publications chair Rusty Godino and Members-at-Large Vin Godino and Andrea Buka, and a few members. Being slightly short of a quorum, no business was transacted.

- Rusty announced that Volume VI of Ledyard history is now at the

printer, with delivery expected about February 1.

- Andrea reported that progress continues with data entry to the Past Perfect program and the library catalog. Two boxes of photos and documents pertaining to the sawmill have been sorted and readied for scanning.

The meeting concluded with a cookie swap and demonstrations on holiday crafts. Sheila Correia showed how to make an orange clove pomander, and Ellen Fossum put together several decorative items from greenery found in her garden.

*The above are condensed from the official minutes taken by Lee Moore. Condensation by the editor.*

## **Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor

I just want to let the membership know what an enjoyable meeting and program was held on December 13, 2011. When the suggestion to have a "cookie swap" came up, I admit I had my doubts, mostly because I didn't know what a cookie swap was.

The program started with Sylvia Correia teaching us to make "pomander balls": oranges literally covered with whole cloves, then rolled in cinnamon. When dried, the balls will last over 30 years.

Next was a demonstration in using backyard greenery for holiday decorations. Boxwood trimmings, pine branches, seed pods, etc that can be found in your own yard, can be used to decorate your home. They could be used year round. Ellen Bothamly Fossum gave clear concise and easy directions to make what appeared to be very complex arrangements.

Next up was the cookie swap: Bring one kind of cookie; go home with a variety of cookies. I put my haul in the freezer and when they came out at Christmas, my family thought I had been baking all month. I had to confess. It was all because of the Historical Society!

Please come and join us-Enjoy!!

*Rusty Godino*

### **Would You Like to Receive the Acorn via Email?**

Printing and mailing *The Acorn* is one of the Society's largest annual expenses. Delivery of the newsletter via email would cut down on these substantially. A number of members have signed up for email delivery, which comes as a pdf file in advance of the regular mailing. To change from postal to email delivery just email a request to the editor at [acorn@kitfoster.com](mailto:acorn@kitfoster.com). Be sure to include the email address to which you want the issues sent.

## **Pay your dues, recruit a member?**

Our membership year runs nominally from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting. **Dues for 2011-2012 are now due and payable.** If your dues are paid through 2012 (check your mailing label), please use this form to recruit a new member.

### **Ledyard Historical Society Membership Year 2011-2012**

Name _____	_____ Senior \$5.00
Address _____	_____ Senior Couple \$8.00
_____	_____ Individual \$10.00
Telephone _____	_____ Family \$15.00
E-mail address _____	_____ Patron \$25.00
Special interests or comments _____	_____ Life \$150.00
_____	_____ Life Couple \$200.00

Mail to: Ledyard Historical Society  
P.O. Box 411  
Ledyard, CT 06339-0411



THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Box 411  
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

## Who's Who at Ledyard Historical Society 2011-2012

President: Kit Foster	464-6466	Second District Schoolhouse:	
Vice President:		Bill Fossum	464-2575
Ellen Bothamly Fossum	464-2575	Hospitality:	
Secretary: Lee Moore	572-7084	Information Technology:	
Treasurer: Nancy P. Avery	464-9574	Scott Buka	464-8540
Membership: Kit Foster	464-6466	Publications: Rusty Godino	464-6314
Historian: Jan Bell	464-2061		
Newsletter: Kit Foster	464-6466	<b>Board Members at Large</b>	
Publicity: Barbara Duncan	464-2200	Vin Godino	
Curator: Bill Fossum	464-2575	Andrea Buka	
		Jeanne Allyn	