



THE HOURGLASS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER WILLINGTON

Vol. IV

Willington, Connecticut September, 1976

No. 1

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we pass from one historically significant year, the Bicentennial of our country, to another, the 250th anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Willington in 1777, the Historical Society should reassess its role in the celebrations. During the Bicentennial we planned and produced a 4 H Open Class Fair on 3 July 1976. This was an integral part of the town wide celebration over the weekend of the Fourth of July. Besides the entries of handcrafted items and vegetables and flowers we urged people to bring in historically significant quilts. The response was gratifying, and the quilts included an old signature quilt brought in by Fern Callward to the handmade quilt, and other linen for a doll bed brought in by Sue Schur. Isabel Weigold brought some old photographs of the town from the Society's collections, and visitors to the fair had fun trying to identify the unknown people. Putting on the fair was a great deal of work, but also lots of fun. The Society would like to expand on this idea for its May 1977 program. The fair would again include handcrafted items from townspeople. But

we would also like more items of historical interest to display in honor of the incorporation of the town. This May fair will be our main salute to the 250th anniversary of the town - so we will need much more help and cooperation from Society members. We urge all to pay your dues, and volunteer to help with the fair, or any of the other programs we hope to offer during this year. As president of the Society, I hope that these two significant years coming together will stimulate a revival of interest in the town and its history - and that much of that interest will be channelled into the work of the Willington Historical Society.

Betsy McIlvaine
President.

UPCOMING PROGRAM SEPTEMBER 7th

We swing into our program year on Tuesday, September 7th with lecturer - chanteyman Stuart Gillespie in the lead. Mr. Gillespie teaches music at MIAM and works at Old Mystic Seaport during the summer where he is "chanteyman" in the re-enactment of early American sailors' routines. He is an expert on the varied roles of music in life

aboardship - in both recreation and labor.

Mr. Gillespie's lecture and demonstration will follow a short business meeting at 7:30 P.M., Tuesday, September 7th at the Old Town Hall. Please call this interesting program to the attention of friends and neighbors who might enjoy it.

SOCIETY PLANS YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

The Executive Committee met in August to discuss plans for the upcoming year. This year the Historical Society will be meeting the first Tuesday night of each month with programs planned for September, November, and March. In months when no program is planned the Tuesday meetings will be devoted to working on Society projects. All meetings are open and, unless otherwise announced, are held at the Town Hall. Before each program meeting an issue of the Hourglass will be sent to members to inform them of upcoming events. We hope that you will reserve those first Tuesday nights for our meetings this year, as the more people who participate, the more interesting things we can do. In fact, if you have any ideas for projects, programs or field trips that you would like to have the Society carry out then come and suggest them.

As described elsewhere, our first program brings an excellent outside speaker to Willington with a lecture on sea chanties. For the November or March meeting we plan a program on the pros and cons of establishing an historic district in town with guests from surrounding towns and from the State Historical Commission. For the other meeting we will either have another speaker or arrange a field trip such as a tour of the Hitchcock Museum. Our May activities will focus on a 250th Anniversary Fair like the open-class fair which we ran last July for the Bicentennial celebration - but even bigger with more of an emphasis on historical exhibits.

In addition to planning this fair and reopening the issue of historical

districts for Willington this year, The Society is hoping to publish its chronology of local history. Mrs. Weigold reports that the historical research committee has condensed most of its information onto file cards which are now being ordered and revised into a coherent whole. An effort is also being made to stimulate townwide participation in the anniversary celebration. A letter has been written to the Board of Selectmen suggesting that a 250th Anniversary Commission be appointed to sponsor and coordinate related projects by other organizations. Our president also wrote to the Superintendent of Schools to offer the Society as a source of ideas and information which might be incorporated in school projects this year.

ATTENTION: PICTURES OF WILLINGTON NEEDED FOR PUBLICATION

On Saturday, September 11th from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. Mrs. Weigold will be at the Old Town Hall with Sue Newman to photograph old pictures of Willington for the chronology. If you have or know of any old pictures of Willington and its residents, or any newer pictures of sites which have now changed or buildings which have been destroyed, please call Mrs. Weigold at 429-2656 and arrange to have them reproduced.

If you cannot be there on the 11th pictures can be left with Mrs. Weigold beforehand. If it is difficult for you to get them to her then arrangements can be made to come to your house with the equipment some other time. Just let her know.

SOCIETY BENEFITS FROM BANK'S GRATITUDE

The Savings Bank of Tolland has donated to the Willington Historical Society \$50.00 in recognition of the work of member Paul Bugbee in restoring the Bank's new branch in the Willington train station. Mr. Guy Cambria, President of the Bank, presented the check to Mrs. Betsy McIlvaine, President of the Society,

on Friday evening July 3rd, 1976 at the Bank. Mr. Bugbee, whose father served as stationmaster at Willington for several years in the 1930's, provided information and photographs on the station as it had once appeared. One of the photographs was made into a postcard for the Bank. Copies are available at the Bank and the Town Office Building. Mr. Bugbee also helped in locating the old lanterns and baggage car which help maintain the atmosphere of the Bank. Mr. Cambria, who has restored other old buildings as branches of his Bank, expressed his appreciation for the work of Mr. Bugbee. The Society is appreciative of the method used to preserve an historic landmark of Willington.

Part of the Society's oral history project includes a taped interview with Mr. Bugbee about the early days of train service in Willington. If you would like to hear it, and have a cassette player, please contact Ms. McIlvaine at 429-3477.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

In this 250th Anniversary Year, we would like to have the largest membership ever in the Willington Historical Society. Former members and new members are invited to join for the 1976-77 year and to participate in the many interesting activities planned during this special year in our town's history. Our membership fees have not been influenced by inflation. The fees continue to be as follows:

Individual	\$3.00
Family	5.00
Corporate	10.00

We invite you to become a member for the 1976-77 year (September 1976 through August 1977) by sending your dues NOW with the attached application form.

Please try to pay your dues by the end of October to ensure that you will have full membership privileges and continue to receive the HOURGLASS.

Jean McDowell
Membership Chairman

FLEA MARKET

The Society will have a booth at the Willington Flea Market again this year where we will sell notepaper and maps, and publicize the Society's existence and activities. The date is September 11th (September 12th if it rains) from 10:00 to 5:00. If you would like to help, call Betsy McIlvaine at 429-3477 after 6:00 P.M.