



THE HOURGLASS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ~ WILLINGTON

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No. 1

FUTURE PROGRAMS

Our first meeting of the year will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall on September 27. Thomas Mocko, who has done extensive research on the development of the road system in Willington will speak. Tom is a native of Willington and worked on the project under CETA at the direction of the Board of Selectmen in 1978-79.

Questions such as which roads were the first to be built, who lived on them, and how did the roads get their names may be answered.

November 20 - Mrs. Dorothy Clark, of Ledyard, Conn., will give a demonstration on how the colonists made soap. She became interested in soap making when she found old tools, molds, etc. in her attic. She has given this demonstration to other groups all around Connecticut, and as far away as New Hampshire.

March 20 - The Czechoslovak-American Club will present a program of singing and dancing led by Frank Tomaskovic, the music director. Some of you may remember the first meeting, sponsored by the Historical Society in 1975 when Gerry Novotny presented a history of the Czechs in Willington and showed movies of her two trips to Czechoslovakia. Fancy pastries, made by Czech members of the society were served and a collection of fine linens, cut glass, dolls and crafts were exhibited. As the meeting came to a close the people lingered to talk, and spontaneously broke into old Czech songs, nearly forgotten. As a result of that first meeting many people of Czech background were inspired to organize and have been meeting regularly as well as performing on a number of occasions around the state.

May 15 - Old-time Music Festival.
If you play an instrument, sing or

dance, contact Harriet Marco. We would like to bring back some of our old songs and have a community sing so look in your attics and see what you can find.

There is a great deal of musical talent in Willington which has not been heard or seen locally in a long time. We aren't looking for professional renditions, just good old-fashioned fun. Come and sing-along, hear your neighbor play the violin or accordion or whatever and have a good time.

ELECTIONS

Now officers elected in June are:

Betty Robertson - President
 Frances Daley - Treasurer
 Barbara Shaw - Recording and corresponding Secretary

Remaining Officers are:

Vice President - Ernest Kline
 Historian - Raymond Daley

Newly appointed are:

Harriet Marco - Program chairperson
 Barbara Shaw - Ways and Means chairperson.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Willington Historical Society for the chance to serve as President. I have been a member of the Society since its formation and have taken part in many of the activities.

The Executive Board has met and discussed many program possibilities. We hope to offer interesting programs to our members and the public. If anyone has any special interests they would like us to investigate please contact me.

Willington has many old and interesting things to be shared and preserved. We must be on the look out for these and not let them be destroyed or buried forever.

I am looking forward to working with the members of the Historical Society for the next two years.

Betty Robertson
 President

NEW HOME FOR OLD TREASURES

During the summer some of the Society's holdings were moved out of the library at

Hall School since the school is in the process of renovation and the library will be moving to what is now the auditorium. Jared Spark's bust was removed to the vault at the Town Clerk's office along with books, tools, and other artifacts. Those records and books which are used by students in their research will remain at the Library.

On July 12 material was purchased to make curtains for our new quarters. Windows were washed, floors swept and our few possessions were moved in. Those who helped were Harriet Marco, Frances Daley, Betty Robertson and Isabel Weigold.

SUMMER FUNDRAISERS

The Society participated in the Tail Gate sale sponsored by the St. Jude's Guild on July 21st and made a profit of \$23.25. We spent \$11.00 of that on an old barrel with wooden hoops. The barrel is in excellent condition and a rarity nowadays.

The Flea Market in September was well attended and brought a profit of \$50.00 in sales and membership dues of \$5.00.

AUTHOR AT WORK

Rox Demers has completed six chapters of our history out of a projected 14. He reports that it took him longer than he had expected to get through the volumes of research information. He will continue to work on it during vacations and weekends. We are still interested in collecting more pictures. If you, or someone you know, have any you think might be of interest, please contact Betty Robertson or Isabel Weigold.

DONATIONS

Isabel Weigold has been receiving donations from people for whom she has done research. This money is being set aside in a special fund which will be used to defray the cost of publishing the History of Willington when it is completed.

DEDICATIONS (continued)

We have \$32.00 to date. Anyone wishing to contribute to this fund may do so by contacting Isabel or Frances Daley.

EAST WILLINGTON:

ONCE THE BUSIEST PART OF TOWN

Deacon John Weston had a grist and saw mill on the water privilege. Nearby was a long one-story shop used by John Heath for the manufacture of horn combs. A buzz saw invented by Daniel Hartshorn of Mansfield, in 1776, was first used for cutting the teeth of these combs. Seven or eight people were employed; the hoofs and horns had to be boiled in oil and pressed into shape required for the combs. One of the employees was David Lewis, who was said to be a fullblooded Monegan Indian. Across the river from the Weston mill was the farm of Rosca Vinton, and his blacksmith shop, he made a large part of the farming tools used in that section. The most important industry, however, was the tanning and shoe business carried on by Amos Preston and his sons. They made cow-hide brogans for the southern slaves, and for a time it was a very profitable business.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need someone to serve as membership chairperson and another person for publicity. There are numerous short-term jobs involving researching for specific kinds of information such as the origin of the Jared Sparks bust, information about some of our earliest settlers - where did they come from and where did they go. Investigating land marks past and present. Where were the old mills, how large were they, what did they produce, etc. Anyone interested in any of these items, please contact Betty Robertson.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

This is the beginning of the new fiscal year for the Society. Dues may be paid to Mrs. Frances Daley, treasurer, at the first meeting or you may use the blank attached to this newsletter and send it in to the treasurer.