



# THE HOURGLASS

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ~ WILLINGTON

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### SCARIKING: A PLACE IN HISTORY

No one knows when soap was first discovered, like most mysteries it now has become a legend. Gaul is said to have used a hair dressing made of goat oil and beech tree ashes and when he got caught in a storm, a lather was formed.

More logically, about 3,000 years ago on Sapo Hill in Rome, grease from sacrificial animals mixed with ashes of altar fires, ran down hill and formed a slippery clay on the banks of the Tiber River. When the washer women pounded their clothes on this clay, they found the clothes cleaned easier.

Before soap, people cleaned with oil, earth or plant ashes. They also rubbed with braz, sand or pumpice stone. In the 600's the Italians were making large amounts of crude soap from fats or oils and potash. In 700 Spain became known for its castile soap which used olive oil instead of animal fat.

This, then, was the introduction to the November meeting at which Dot Clarke of Ledyard demonstrated how the early colonists made soap in their homes.

It was hoped that the soap would be ready to be sold at the St. Jude's Bazar but unfortunately it never

hardened. All is not lost, however; it can be reboiled and shaped anew!

A meeting is planned for April in which anyone interested in helping to remold the soap may come and bring a mold. Glass, pottery, wood or rubber molds may be used. Plastic or aluminum molds cannot. For further information, call Harriet Marco at 429-2300.

### PIONEER "RECIPT" FOR WASHING CLOTHES

Expanding on the topic of soap making, the following is a note a pioneer mother wrote to her daughter telling her how to wash clothes. It was found on a plaque in the Appalachian area.

1. Bild a fire in backard to het kettle of rain water.
2. Set tubs so sacke won't blow in the eyes if wind is pert.
3. Sheve hole cake of lie soap in biling water
4. Sort things make 3 piles - 1 pile white, 1 pile cullard, 1 rags and britches (work).
5. Star flour in cold water to smooth for starch and thin down with biling water.
6. Rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard, then kil. Rub cullard but

"Receipt" continued:

- don't bil. Take white things out of kettle with broom handle, rench, blu and starch.
- 7. Spread tee towels on grass. Hang old rags on fence.
- 8. Pour rench water in flower bed
- 9. Scrub privy seat and floor with sopy water.
- 10. Turn tubs upside down. Put on clean dress, smooth hair with side combs. Brew up tea. Sit and rast and rock a spell and Count Blessings.

**A QUILT AND AN ATLAS:  
TWO IMPORTANT DONATTONS**

Mrs. Sally Merrow, daughter of Mrs. Doris McBee, gave a signature quilt to the Society in November, 1979. This is the first quilt the Society has received and it is believed to be about 130 years old. It has 77 blocks, each one signed with a name and the town in which the person lived. All names were written in ink, presumably by the same person. Forty-four of the names were from Willington; 7 from Willimantic; 6 from Tolland; 4 from Brooklyr (Ct.); 1 from Mansfield; 1 from Virginia; 1 from Manchester and 3 from Coventry. It is estimated that the quilt was probably made around 1850.

Another important donation was received from Mrs. Hazel Sundt who contributed a rare copy of the Windham/Tolland County Atlas printed in 1869. Each of the maps was done in water color, by hand. The Society had one page of the Willington map reprinted several years ago. We are indeed fortunate to have two such valuable additions to our collection. The Society wishes to thank the donors wholeheartedly.

**HONORARY MEMBERSHIP**

Mr. and Mrs. Clarke Ruby were given lifelong honorary membership to the Society in recognition of their generous contributions to it, making it possible for us to hire Ronald Demers who is now in the process of writing a History of Willington.

**BAZAAR PROVES PROFITABLE**

Thanks to the cooperation of so many members of the Society, we realized a profit of \$110.95 from our participation in the St. Jude Bazar. The baskets made

by our members were very popular especially those with attractively filled Christmas greens and dried flowers. Christmas tree decorations, pillows, spice ropes and other attractive items helped to make the bazaar a success.

**HISTORICAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE**

Ernest Kline reports that their work is progressing slowly. They are currently researching all the houses around the Town Green to determine when they were built. Most of them have been completed, but there are still a few - his own and the Williams house which are difficult to trace. The parsonage, Ye Old Manse, is also a mystery.

Mrs. Thelma King has been appointed to the committee, replacing Leonard Todd who resigned.

**OLD PHOTOGRAPHS**

The Society is still collecting old photos. Mrs. Gardiner Hall Jr. loaned several of South Willington to be copied and returned. These pictures will be a valuable addition to our present collection which is growing every year.

**WILLINGTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

In 1777 Elder David Lillibridge, from Exeter, Rhode Island, bought a farm in the north part of town, and with the cooperation of one or two neighboring Baptists, formed a church. Elder Lillibridge was pastor of that church for over fifty years.

About 1779 a church was built on the road leading from Willington to Stafford (believed to be Village Hill Road), at the Lillibridge place about a mile north of the present Roaring Brook School House. This house stood until 1819, but was described by a visitor to Willington as one "which had never been the most sumptucus, and is at present very much out of repair, with unpainted boards and broken windows." Among the earliest members of this church were families of the name of Potter whose ancestors came from Exeter, Rhode Island, in 1797 and who have given the name of "Potter district" to that part of town.

## SPRING PROGRAM

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 19 at the Center School, 7:30 p.m. Please note the change in date and place from the previous announcement.

The Czechoslovak-American Club will present a program of singing and dancing led by Frank Tomaskovic, music director. Many of the members of this group are also members of the Society.

All members are asked to come and bring a friend to what promises to be a delightful evening.

On May 15, Harriet Marco, program chairperson, plans an evening of entertainment — an old-time music festival to be held at Center School, 7:30 p.m. Music selections should be at least 100 years old. She has located music in her attic which includes many old familiar tunes. Anyone who plays an instrument, sings or dances is encouraged to call Harriet and anyone having old music is urged to bring it along. A sing-along is also planned, so mark this date on your calendar and come and enjoy the music of long ago.

## LECTURE SERIES IN STORRS

A new noncredit course is being offered at the University of Connecticut entitled "The Indians of North America Past and Present" to be held on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:15 p.m. beginning March 26, at the Bishops Center. The lecturer will aim at revising or destroying some of the prevailing stereotypes of American Indian lifeways. The lecturer is Robert Bee who is an anthropologist at the University of Connecticut who has been studying Indian Communities in the South West and Great Plains since 1961. If you would like any further information please contact Isabel Weigold.

## PREHISTORIC ARCHEOLOGY IN CONNECTICUT

The Connecticut League of Historical Societies will hold a meeting in the Elmwood Community Center in West Hartford on Saturday, March 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Ken Feder of the Central Connecticut State College will speak on Prehistoric Archeology in Connecticut. If anyone is interested in attending this meeting please contact Isabel Weigold.