



MARCH PROGRAM

Teddy Bears

Helen Purnell of Tolland, a collector and researcher of Teddy Bears, will talk about the favorite toy of many of us. The "Cabbage Patch Kid" of an earlier time was first made as a tribute to Teddy Roosevelt's refusal to shoot an aged, ailing bear in Louisiana, and has been one of the most popular toys owned by the country's children since the early 1900's. Mrs. Purnell has a collection of over 200 Teddy Bears which was started with a gift from a friend who owned a Teddy Bear store. Many of her bears were given to her by people who were looking for a "good home" for their pets.

COME AND BRING A FRIEND

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Center School

Date: March 15, 1985

The Historical Society booth at the St. Jude Bazaar in November proved very profitable, raising the sum of \$138 for the society. Our thanks to all who contributed and to those who worked at the bazaar. There are still calendars available (at a bargain price). Also, for anyone who has not yet purchased a copy of The History of Willington or who wishes to buy one as a gift,

they are available at a cost of \$18 - \$19.50 if the cost is to include postage and handling.

NEW ACQUISITIONS

Penny and Ronald Dionne of Glass Factory Schoolhouse Road have promised to the Historical Society a Willington Pickle Bottle. This bottle has been authenticated by glass expert Norman Heckler of Woodstock as Willington glass. It is blue-green in color and of rectangular shape with a wide mouth. It is 11 3/4 inches tall with a gothic arch on each of the four sides. The bottom is 3 3/4 inches square and has a 1/4 inch perimeter frame with a concave center. The Dionnes also have a collection of Willington glass shards which they are willing to make available for study.

Shirley Weik, a former 4E County Agent in Tolland County now living in Texas, has offered, through Frances Daley, to donate a complete set of Scene and Herd, a newsletter which was published for and about the 4-H clubs in Tolland County for many years. This will be a valuable addition to our 4-H memorabilia.

The Historical Society has been invited by the Board of Selectmen to discuss plans for the Old Town Hall.

The board has been informed by the Registrars of Voters that in order to be in compliance with Section 9-168D of the General Statutes of Connecticut, the Town Hall must be made available to the handicapped. This would necessitate widening of doorways to thirty-one inches in width, the installation of a ramp and handrails. If the above is not carried out the Town Hall will not be able to be used for election purposes. Thoughts, ideas and suggestions on this subject would be most appreciated.

ORAL HISTORY

The taping of oral history is a project dear to our hearts and will soon be carried out. Gigi Booth volunteered some time ago to interview long-time residents, and as soon as a tape recorder has been purchased, will proceed with the taping and transcribing. A list of "interviewees" has been drawn up and can be added to at any time. If you know of someone who has an interesting story to tell about education, work, transportation, business or any other subject important in Willington history, please contact Gigi Booth.

COMING EVENTS

- March 15, 1985 - Helen Purnell - Toddy Bears
- May 17, 1985 - King concert

Letter from William Curtiss dated
January 6, 1864 - California Gulch

Beloved Wife and Children,

I am much elated to hear once more from home and to hear that you are all in tolerable health. I received Austin's letter the 13th Dec. which is the first I have heard from home since Horace left here. Austin arrived home sooner than I expected when I received his letter from the upper crossing of the Platte. I think Sturdivent made a great trip of it; and I am glad you took some other conveyance for it is what I thought you would do after I heard from you. We have worked out that claim both sides of the ditch and I have jumped No. 18 the one above where McIntyre worked at Cotten's and think that will pay us this winter. J.M. Cotten has got back and we have formed a ditch Co. and am running a ditch from No. 40 in the Gulch up onto

the flat north and up toward where McIntyre's was and camped in the summer. How far it will be extended I do not know yet, but as far as it will pay. The ditch is drifted and the dirt is washed that is taken out.

Now as to the numerous notes which stand out against me there, seems to be very surprising but there is not one but what you all know of and if they can be put off until I can send some money all right, but if not then the next best thing must be done, and I hope it will come out right in the end. I think I will be able to send home two hundred dollars by the first of next month so you can get it by the first of March and then you will be prepared to pay up those numerous notes that are pressing for payment. The one for grafting I hope you will pay for no more than what is alive. If you cannot satisfy yourself get someone to look at them and have it all right. I have on hand now one hundred and twenty five dollars and think I can make the two hundred by Feb. and then I shall send it, but I don't know how to send it yet for neither Horace or Austin has said one word about what they got for gold dust and I am at a loss to know what is the best to send the dust or a draft. Horace has not wrote a word yet and he promised to write as soon as he got home and now I want Austin to write and send me a paper Every Week and send to Denver City Box No. 284 and then I shall get them. I have taken that box in Denver P.O. on purpose to get what belongs to me so no one else can get them.

The weather is fine here for winter and has been quite warm the last week, every day, and seems like pleasant March weather more than like January. There has been pretty lively times here for two weeks. Two Christmas Balls and one New Years Ball and as much drinking and shouting and running carousing as ever I saw in any place yet. We worked all day Christmas and New Years - we quit at 2 O'Clock P.M. and made three dollars and twenty cents a piece, but we do not make quite as much every day, but we think that was well for New Years so we live in hopes for the coming year or present. I expect to make a little something to take home with me yet if the good Being sees proper to spare me

William Curtiss letter continued -

to go home and I hope you will be blessed with a happy year and good health. I hope Austin will see that you do not suffer for anything and he must take such measures as he thinks best to get along but I was in hopes he would stay at home this winter at least. John is with me yet and probably will be for the present. Snow is about a foot deep in the Gulch and is good sleighing. Goods come from Denver every week yet and goods keep down as low as they were in summer. We have fresh pork from the states but I have had but seven pounds at forty cent per lb.

We are all in good health and work every day. Weather good and no severe storms yet and I think we can work all winter. The water does not freeze here yet and I think it will not all winter. Give my best respects to Mr. Doane and family and all those who may enquire after me. Horace and Mary, I suppose, think no more of the Rocky mountains nor of any one here so I need not look for anything from them so give them my best wishes with all the Babies.

I remain yours with deep respect and regard.

William Curtiss