



THE HOURGLASS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ~ WILLINGTON

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MAY MEETING

Old Time Song Fest ~ Everybody Come

Bring The Children

May 16, 1980 - 7:30 p.m.

Willington Center School

The Historical Society invites you to sing and hear some of the most popular old songs at an "Old Time Song Fest". Refreshments will be served.

Three of Tom Greaser's music students will participate in the program, Lisa Bugbee, Derek Faskew and Cindy Bugbee. Harmonica selections will be played by Alex Kuchinsky, Alex Dukansky and Alfred Hunyadi. Nancy King and Claudia Rondeau will present a selection of western melodies and Judy Marco and Mary King Belanger will sing a sea chantey which was written in Ashford and called "The Ashford Song". A Community Chorus, directed by Marlene Carr, will present a program of old hymns and a Senior Citizens group will sing some old popular melodies. A sing-along of about ten oldtime favorites, selected by the executive committee, will complete the program. This program is an experiment to learn if Willington residents would attend this kind of get-together if offered on a periodic basis. Your suggestions will be most welcome.

The Willington Historical Society has collected words and music for over one hundred songs popular in Eastern Connecticut over 100 years ago. Many people have contributed old song books from their attics for perusal and interesting facts about old music have been discovered. Did you know that "Hail, Columbia" was Washington's inaugural march? That "Dixie" originated in New York, while the music to "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was a southern melody? The oldest song book the Society has found was published in 1853; the earliest group singing in the western world is documented in a chronicle telling us that Columbus' sailors knelt and sang "Te Deum" on the beach at San Salvador.

RECENT GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

A 1912 edition of THE PRESS (now the STAFFORD PRESS), containing an article: "The Golden Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner Hall, Jr., of South Willington. . . . When it first became known that Mr. and Mrs. Hall were to have a golden celebration, steps were at once taken to procure a loving cup to be presented at the celebration by the employees (of the Thread Co.). The response was hearty and generous and the cup, suitably inscribed and accompanied with a bouquet of fifty carnations, was at the banquet." Following a description of the anniversary celebration was a history of the Gardiner Hall, Jr., Thread Company as well as a geneological account of the family. This welcome addition to our historical collection was given by Mrs. Helen Church of South Willington.

Mrs. Emily Zemek has donated pictures of the 1954 Hall Memorial School graduating class, a scrapbook dedicated to Raymond Pike, teacher and advisor to the class, and a study the class did on Civil Defense. Included in this gift were two booklets, one on the Federated Churches of Willington dated 1951 and the other "The History of the Town of Willington" by Clara Sharp Potter and dated 1920.

The Society wishes to thank these donors and reminds its readers that we now have a place to store materials and welcome further contributions.

Mrs. Sally (McBee) Merrow has indicated that she will be contributing the gold shovel which was used during the ground breaking ceremonies for the Hall Memorial Church in 1910.

THE FLEA MARKET

The Historical Society will have a booth at the Flea Market to be held on Saturday, September 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Anyone who would like to contribute items to be sold may contact Mrs. Betty Robertson, president.

WALKING TOUR

Ernest Kline will lead a walk along the Old Common Road on Sunday, May 25th. Anyone interested should meet at the Kline home on Willington Green at 1:00 p.m.

The distance to be covered is about three miles and a leisurely pace will require about two hours for the route. Common Road was once a main coach road and heavily traveled. Now much of it is passable only on foot or on horseback. At the far end of the proposed hike are rocks on which are marks left by passing coaches.

Other walks planned for ensuing months include the site of Jared Sparks' birth, sites of old saw and grist mills and Indian camping grounds. These will be announced through the newspaper.

PROGRESS REPORT ON WILLINGTON'S HISTORY

Ron Demers, who is writing our history, reports that he is two-thirds finished. He has been doing some additional research regarding the modernization of Willington, including such things as numbers of telephones and numbers of cars and when electricity was installed. He would like to know more about the kinds of games children played, what people did for entertainment and what kinds of social organizations there were, both in the earliest days and up to and including the 1930's. Anyone having information that would help in his research should contact Isabel Weigold at 429-2656.

OUR CZECH CONNECTION

Geraldine Novotny claims that the Willington Historical Society furnished the inspiration for the organization of the Czechoslovak-American Club. The Society sponsored a Czech night in October, 1975, which included movies of Czechoslovakia, an exhibit of Czech artifacts and a dessert hour featuring traditional Czech cakes and pastries. People came from as far away as New London. During the evening someone began singing and soon the entire group was participating. With Gerry's encouragement, a group was organized and has been active ever since, entertaining groups throughout the state.

The Historical Society was pleased to have the Club return in March. About forty people were

CZECHS, Continued.

present to see the group dance and hear them sing their native songs. Mrs. Caroline Turner is over 80 years of age and still actively participating.

OLD HOUSES RESEARCH

Isobel Weigold has been researching the land records recently to determine the ages of houses in the Glassfactory district, the Sharp's Mills houses, the Hubbel Loomis home (Now Georgianna Booth's home) and the Cyrus Topliff place in Daleville (Now Hugh and Nellie Miller's home). Eventually, it is hoped to have markers designed for these houses found to be 100 years old or older.

THE FEDERATED CHURCH OF WILLINGTON

"This church has had a noble record in the work of missions, especially in giving to the cause where the Vintons labored and lay down their lives in the rich fields of Burma. It was voted by this church in 1920 that its offerings to the New World Movement should be used to erect a building at the Judson College in Rangoon, Burma, to be called Willington Hall, in loving memory of the Vintons and the Johnsons." This statement was included in the Handbook of the Federated Churches of Willington in 1951. It would be interesting to know if this building is still standing — a bit of Willington in a far-off place where so much is happening in these days of unrest.

WILLINGTON'S CONSTITUTIONAL OAK

A letter sent by Clara Potter to the State Librarian in 1927 stated "The Willington, Connecticut, Constitutional Oak was set out on the lawn of the late Colonel William Henry Hall's home in South Willington (now the Convalescent Home) where it now stands a healthy symmetrical tree about thirty feet high and eight to ten inches in diameter three feet from the ground. It is beautiful, healthy, promising and respected."

"This tree is not only one of the prides of the homestead but also of the people of Willington many of whom, if not most of whom, know what the tree is and where located."

WILLINGTON'S OAK, Continued.

The library has a picture of the tree as it looked then. The tree is still standing and healthy. The Historical Society should take a picture of it now and send it to the state librarian for the records since there are few such trees still living. Any Volunteers?

HISTORICAL QUIZ

1. What three towns were named for presidents of the United States?

2. How many place names in Connecticut which were taken from the Bible can you name?

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

1870. First Irish families arrived in Willington.

"Messrs. Johnson and Whiting on Willington Hill, proprietors of the card factory, are doing quite an extensive business in the manufacturing of card clothing — they are now engaged in filling orders from one of the Willimantic mill companies and machinery is run by a Roper Caloric Engine. They intend removing their works to their new building in Stafford Springs some time in the fall." -- Taken from the Tolland County Press, 1870.

Willington took first prize with 33 pairs of oxen at the Tolland County Agricultural Society Exhibition.

James J. Reagan began business at the Daleville Woolen Mills.

The last remaining family in Daleville moved to Missouri.

The Glass Factory is out of business but hopes to start up again.

Gardiner Hall, Jr., invented and patented the Automatic Spool Printing Press for imprinting labels at both ends of the spool at once, thereby saving the expense and disagreeable operation of putting on paper labels. The machines occupied the same space as a sewing machine and required but limited power. The machines were capable of producing 160,000 to 200,000 impressions per day.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Washington, Madison and Monroe.
2. Bethlehem, Bethel, Bashen, Bozrah, Bethany, Canaan, Lebanon, and Sharon.

FIVE YEARS AGO

The Historical Society was featuring its third annual tag sale.

Mrs. Josephine Spees had donated three volumes of Jared Sparks books, including "The Life of George Washington", "The Life of Franklin" and "The Life of John Ledyard".

Willington was getting ready for the Bicentennial celebration with Paul McIlvaine as chairman.

MORE LIGHT ON GLAZIER FAMILY

Mrs. Paul Kline of California, a descendant of David Glazier whose brother Daniel built the Edward Williams house on Willington Green, recently sent the Society two pictures. One was of the Federated Church and the house next to it taken in 1922. The other was a house we didn't immediately identify. Since then we have determined that it is a picture of the Joseph Hipsky, Sr., house on Moose Meadow Road. The story with the picture said this was the house where Carlos Glazier and his father, David, were born, and that "David and his brother, Daniel, sat up all night 'running bullets' for their father, Silas, who started the next day in answer to the Lexington call with Capt. (afterwards Col.) Kierllen of George Washington's staff.

Research has determined that this is indeed the Hipsky place, probably built in the 1750's. Another interesting fact is that prior to the Hipsky's moving in there could be seen on the old linoleum floor indentations said to have been made by someone wearing a peg leg. Mrs. Kline tells us that Suze Johnson, wife of Silas Glazier injured her leg while her husband was in the Revolutionary War and lay unattended for some time. She had

to have the leg amputated and wore a peg leg thersafter.

We have also determined that the legend on the picture appears to be in error since David would have been four years old at the time of the Lexington Alarm and his brother would not have been born at that time.

PRESERVATION OF RECORDS ENDANGERED

The vault where the Society presently has valuable records stored is badly in need of a dehumidifier to keep the dampness under control. We are currently investigating prices. Anyone having information about such equipment is asked to call the Society's president, Betty Robertson.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

The date for the annual meeting in the fall has not yet been set but we plan to have a program in September. At this time two officers must be elected, a vice-president and a secretary. A nominating committee will be appointed to present a slate which will be voted on at that time. Annual dues will also be payable during that month.

SOAP MAKING WORKSHOP

Time: May 27, 1930 - 7:30 p.m.

Place: Harriet Marco
Eldridge Road

Save this date to try some new ideas for making soap. Harriet Marco emphasizes that this will be a trial and error session. Bring rubber gloves and anything you like for molds; egg cartons, muffin tins, etc.