



THE HOURGLASS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ~ WILLINGTON

Vol. IX

Willington, Connecticut - November 1980

No. 2

NOVEMBER MEETING - November 20, 1980

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Center School Music Room

WOODLAND USE AND MANAGEMENT IN CONNECTICUT

Thomas McEvoy of the Department of Natural Resources will be our guest speaker at the November meeting. He will talk about our Connecticut forests of the past and present and what we hope for the future.

Mr. McEvoy has found some antique glass slides made in the early 1900's showing Connecticut woodland scenes including logging methods of those days and the ravages of the Chestnut blight. These slides should be interesting for their own historical value as well as for the scenes that are depicted.

Many Willington families are involved in the marketing of wood both as producers and consumers and Mr. McEvoy is prepared to answer questions about wood as a fuel, from woodlot management and cord size to burning guidelines.

Please come to the Center School Music Room on Thursday, November 20 at 7:30 p.m. and enjoy a discussion of a home industry of the past which has become a necessity of the present.

PRESERVATION OF TOWN HALL

Just the day before our last meeting on the 25th of September we learned that there was to be a Town Meeting to vote on whether or not to keep the Town Hall.

The Board of Finance felt that since the new school now has adequate space for town meetings that the Town Hall would no longer be needed and, therefore, they saw no reason to support it financially.

A little background information is necessary to point out the need for the town to vote on this issue.

The building was originally the Congregational church built in 1876. After the Congregationalists joined with the Baptists and became the Federated Churches of Willington in 1911 the building was used for a variety of purposes and then finally was sold to the town for \$1.00 in 1924. It was written into the deed that if the building ceased to be used for public purposes it would be returned to the Ecclesiastical Society.

It was learned by members of the Historical Society that the Ecclesiastical Society would not be able to keep the building and would put it up for sale if the Town voted not to retain the building.

As a result a concerted effort was made to encourage people to go to the meeting. A representative of the Connecticut Historical District Commission attended the meeting to attest to the historical value of the building and the Historical Society read a resolution which was drafted by the members at the September meeting which follows:

"We, the Willington Historical Society, resolve that the Town Hall be retained by the Town since it is an important part of our heritage. Built in 1876 by people who sacrificed to raise the money to erect the building as their church, it has served as a public meeting place for over a half century. Therefore, we believe that it should remain in the town's care as a center for town activities."

The meeting was well attended and it was voted unanimously to retain the building. It was suggested that a committee be appointed to study possible uses for the building.

DESCRIPTION OF CHURCH IN 1876
(Now the Town Hall)

In a Tolland County Press article dated November 23, 1876 the interior of the church was described:

"The ceiling of the church is tinted blue, while the walls are light drab. The elegant railing around the pulpit with breast work in front of the steps add much to the architectural beauty of the room.

A superb organ from Esty Manufacturing is a gift of E. T. Fitch of New Haven. On the South wall is a handsome clock donated by H. L. Wade of the Waterbury Clock Co. A highly ornamented chandelier with six side lamps is the gift of L. G. Merrick of Bristol, Connecticut."

Another article dated October 10, 1876 states: "At last, through the earnest efforts of the acting pastor, Rev. E. Colton, the people arose in their earnestness, and had a mind to the work and put forth energy and perseverance. Their efforts have been crowned with success. They have raised among themselves \$800, and \$2500 in cash

have been received from friends from abroad, while several of the valuable gifts have been bestowed by friends in and out of the place."

.... "When all finished, the expense will be about \$5000. Something of a debt still remains on the people; they are, however, in good courage and hope for a full release in due time. When the whole concern is completed, there will be presented to the view of the citizen of the town and the visitor, 'a thing of beauty' and is hoped, a 'joy' for many years."

OFFICERS FOR THE 1980-81 YEAR

President - Betty Robertson
Vice President - Ernest Kline
Secretary - Harold Weigold
Treasurer - Frances Daley

Nancy Desmarais - Membership Chairperson
Isabel Weigold - History Committee
Ernest Kline - House Study Committee
Raymond Daley - Historian
Harriet Marco - Program Chairperson

MUSICAL PRODUCTION PLANNED

Pat McGregor, teacher of the Gifted and Talented at the Hall Memorial School has plans to produce a musical based on Willington's history. The students will do the research, write the music and lyrics and take part in the production. Isabel Weigold will act as the consultant and aid in the research. This promises to be an exciting project. More information will be forthcoming as to the time and place.

DALEVILLE WALK POSTPONED

The walk to the falls to be led by Nick and Harriet Marco last September was postponed due to lack of water. We will try again in the spring.

OUR THANKS FOR YOUR HELP

We had some interesting responses to our request for help. One note from a member in San Francisco: "I am always so interested in 'The Hour-glass'. I would be delighted to do anything to help with the history, but my roots there go back about a hundred years before you are working.

OUR THANKS (continued)

My families were there from the Cape before 1730 and had mostly died or moved to New York by 1825. Can I be of any help? How I would love to be there to help Isabel Weigold work on those old records. That is precisely my cup of tea, and I think it is so important to do."

We have volunteers to work on the vital statistics: Jean McDowell and Nancy Desmaris. Harriet Marco has volunteered to help on the Publication Committee and Elsie Hanks will assist with getting the information on Men and Women in the various wars in order for the appendix of the History.

There are more jobs to be done in getting materials in the vault organized for display. Cataloging our holdings and typing cards so that we know where things are.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS

As most of you know the Superintendent of Schools occupied the Historical Society office while the additions were being built on the schools. Now that they have moved back to their new offices, the Historical Society must negotiate a new agreement with the Board of Selectmen as to the costs involved, length of lease etc. Ernest Kline, Betty Robertson, Isabel Weigold and Harold Weigold will meet with the Board on Thursday, November 6th to discuss the situation.

CORRECTION

Emily Rollinson Poucher, who did the painting recently donated by Mildred Smith was the cousin of Helen Rollinson and not her sister as stated in the last newsletter.

An article in the Tolland County Press dated February 17, 1938 mentioned a painting done by Emily Rollinson of an old room in the home of G. V. Smith (on the green) entitled Antique Bottles which hung in the Vanderbilt Room of the Gallery of Fine Arts Building in New York City.

RIDELE FOUND IN 1899 PAPER

Why is a frog of more value than a cow or a skunk?

Because a cow has four quarters, a skunk has four quarters and a scent (cent) and the frog has four quarters and a greenback.

LETTER FROM JASON BUGBEE DATED MARCH 5, 1917

Dear Friend Burdick:

"I cheerfully comply with your request for information regarding industries in Willington long since vanished. Of course I have no dates or statistics for guidance, and I must scuffle among the halls of memory for that purpose. First as to "Tinkerville" so-called which is a misnomer. The real and appropriate name of said place is Forestville and was known as such in the long ago. I can't imagine how such a ridiculous name should be saddled onto any place that had such a variety of industries that once existed in that place. The first mill built there was used to manufacturing woolen goods. That mill was burned down when I was a little child - something over seventy years ago. The next mill was built by Thomas Mercy. I remember when C. P. Rider and Elisha Carpenter were engaged in the silk business in that place. Afterwards, Joel Smith bought the factory and saw mill and made plowbeams and sawed lumber. Next James Youngs and his brother Thomas made woolen goods and then Charles Morrison and William Needan hired the mill of the Youngs Bros. and did a thriving business making spool thread. They employed some twenty men and women in their business and I have yet to learn that they were all tinkers!" (to be continued).

SHAW'S HOUSE BURNED ON MOOSE MEADOW ROAD

We were saddened to learn that the home of Barbara and Richard Shaw was burned so badly that the entire interior will need to be torn out and rebuilt. They lost all their

SHAW HOUSE BURNED (continued)

personal belongings, furniture etc. The family escaped without injury.

Barbara and Dick have been members of the Society since its founding in 1971. Dick was Vice President and President and Barbara has been active as Kays and Means Chairperson in the past and more recently was Secretary.

The House was believed to have been built in the late 1700's and was owned by C. D. Rider in 1869 and more recently by the Dimmocks.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

- November 20 - WOODLAND USE AND MANAGEMENT IN CONNECTICUT.
Speaker - Thomas McEvoy
Center School Music Room
at 7:30 p.m.
- November 20 - 21 - St. Judes Bazaar
4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
- March 19 - Restoration of Old Dolls
by Vivian Carlson of
Glass Factory Schoolhouse
Road. She will show her
collection of antique
dolls and tell how she
restores them, repainting
and providing new costumes
based on the originals.
- May 21 - Second Annual Song Fest

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you have not yet done so, please fill out the attached membership application and return with your check to Mrs. Nancy Desmarais, West Willington, Ct. 06279.

Nancy has reported that we have 11 single memberships and 20 family memberships paid to date.

ST. JUDES BAZAAR November 20 and 21.

The Historical Society will have a table at the St. Judes Bazaar again this year. We are expecting to have Joe Frogger cookies, soap, Christmas decorations, books, postcards and maps for sale. A workshop was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Daley in November where Christmas decorations were made. Anyone who has any donations should contact Betty Robertson. The bazaar will be held from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. on November 20 and 21 at St. Judes Church on Old Farms Road.