



# THE HOURGLASS

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ~ WILLINGTON

Vol. X

Willington, Connecticut - November 1981

No. 2

**NOVEMBER MEETING -**  
**COLONIAL HOUSES -** A slide presentation  
by Grant Meitzler

Date: November 20, 1981

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Center School

Grant Meitzler, engineer for the Town of Mansfield, has traveled extensively photographing typical examples of colonial architecture. His talk on Friday will include local buildings as well as those in the New England area.

Invite your friends to enjoy an interesting program.

### FLEA MARKET

The 20th Annual Flea Market was a great success for the Historical Society as well as the Federated Church. The day was beautiful and the church reported a record attendance of over 1000 people. We met a number of people who were once residents of Willington who stopped to buy our postcards and notepaper and reminisce about the "good old days."

The Society took in \$121.00 with our painted maps being the most popular item, to say nothing of the old dog tags and fishing licenses. These are collector's items nowadays.

**ST. JUDES BAZAAR -** November 19 and 20

The Society will have a table at the St. Jude's Bazaar as in the past. Members are asked to make items suitable for a Xmas sale and bring them to the church on the 19th any time before the sale begins. The hours are 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. both days.

Maps, books, homemade soap, notepaper, postcards and Joe Frogger cookies will be available for sale as usual.

If you come to the bazaar on Friday, just walk across the street to the Historical Society meeting at 7:30 p.m.

### BOOK PLATE

The book plate design was approved by the Society at its last meeting. The Hocus Pocus Arts of Putnam printed the plates on a press which is approximately 100 years old. The type and the interesting border, a Greek design called egg and dart, was set by hand.

### COMING EVENTS:

March 17 - Speaker from the Stafford Historical Society on Medicinal Springs.

### COMING EVENTS (Continued)

May 21 - Wild flowers, herbs and their medical uses including a demonstration, a slide presentation, and especially brewed herb teas for refreshments.

Barbara Shaw has researched the uses of wild flowers and herbs and has given presentations to historical societies and schools in the area.

### HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

The Board of Selectmen were directed by the town to appoint a five member Commission with three alternatives.

The following were appointed: Ernest Kline, Raymond Daley, Roberts Helfgott, Thelma King and William Bailey. Alternatives are: Denise Ferrari, Denise Johnson and Christine Gooding.

The Commission received its first application last month from James Svejck, Boy Scoutmaster, to approve the installation of new doors on the building where they hold their meetings.

This building was the first Town Hall built in 1876. Previous to this time town meetings were held in the church building.

The present wood doors are badly deteriorated and need to be replaced, possibly with metal doors.

The Boy Scouts hope to raise money to repair the building, which is owned by the town but has been used by the Scouts as a meeting place for many years.

### OFFICERS ELECTED

Betty Robertson and Frances Daley were reelected as Chairperson and treasurer respectively at the meeting in September. This will be Betty's second term in office and Frances has served as treasurer since 1973.

Continuing in office are: Ernest Kline, Vice Chairman and Harold Weigold, Recording Secretary.

### HISTORIC DISTRICT REPORTS

The "Report of the Willington Historical Study Committee" has been well received. There are still some copies available for sale for \$2.75 plus postage. They may also be procured at the

Town Office building during the town clerk's office hours which are from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. daily and on Monday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### OLD BLUE LAWS

The following "Blue Laws" for conduct on the Sabbath were once in force or on the books in New Haven Colony before the American Revolution:

Noone to cross the river, but with an authorized ferryman.

Noone shall run on the Sabbath day or walk in his garden or elsewhere, except reverently to and from meeting.

Noone shall travel, cook victual, make beds, sweep house, cut hair or shave on the Sabbath day.

Noone shall buy or sell land without the permission of the Selectmen.

(reprinted from Historical footnotes, Bulletin of the Stonington Historical Society, May, 1981).

### HOW TO CURE WARTS

"Warts are caused by leaks in the muscles, when the hands are strained, particularly in young people. To cure these, bathe the hands several times a day with Vegetable Elixir, until they are gone. The Elixir will stop the leaks, and the warts will die for want of support from the hands."

(from the "Medical Pocketbook" by Elias Smith, 1822)

### JOB'S TEARS

Does anyone know what Job's Tears are? Miss Jennie Church, in a letter to Miss Dolezal, writes "Then I thought I'd try a new scheme to make money so planted Job's Tears. Should have been greyish, but frost turned them to lovely shades of pink, etc." "I shellaced and made beads and sold, much prettier than original. They grow like corn and are used for beads etc. I sold the write up to a florist magazine." If you know anything about Job's Tears please contact Isabel Weigold or Betty Robertson.

## 70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEDERATED CHURCH OF WILLINGTON

The Federated Church of Willington celebrated their 70th anniversary of the Federation of the Baptist and Congregational Churches Saturday, October 24th with a turkey dinner and anniversary service at the Clara Hall Elliott Memorial Church. This was a double celebration since the dedication of the Memorial Church took place in 1911 also.

Certificates were awarded to those who have been members for 50 years or more and those who have been members for 25 years or more were also recognized.

Rev. Mark Larson, with the help of Isabel Weigold, researched the history of the two churches and found information about the original federation and dedication which served as a basis for the current celebration.

The original hymn of dedication was sung and Selections from the Sermon on the Mount were rendered by Rev. John Brooks who is the Eastern Area Minister of the American Baptist Churches.

Rev. Alex Tinkham, Minister of Church Development for the United Church of Christ brought greetings from the United Church.

Those who have been members of the church for fifty years or more are:

Mason Parker, 62; Phillip Fugbee, 58; Eleanor Bowler, 57; Emily Burns, 57; Frank Kalas, 57; Daisy Pilcher, 57; Julie (Dversky) Bydra, 57; Caroline Hirtl, 57; Mildred (Hirtl) Weber, 57; Joseph Vaboril, Sr., 56; Charles Lyon, 55; Lois (Fugbee) Sloat, 55; Esther Phelps, 53; Sylvie Pokorny, 53; Lois (Joslin) Vogel, 53; Elsie Amidon, 50; Marjorie (Pilcher) Carpenter, 50.

The only known person still living who was present at the federation in 1911 is Doris Hall McCabe who now resides in Pennsylvania.

### EVENTS LEADING TO THE FEDERATION

In the years 1924-25 there was a great religious revival causing many people to doubt the doctrine of infant baptism and to request baptism by immersion. This revival affected the

Congregational minister, Hubbell Loomis, as well as the people.

Reverend Loomis was a teacher and a scholar who inspired such future geniuses as Jared Sparks, the Willington lad who became a famed historian and president of Harvard University, and his own son, Elias Loomis, who won unusual distinction as a professor at Yale University and writer in the field of mathematics.

Reverend Loomis astonished his congregation when he announced his conversion to the Baptist faith. In 1828, Mr. Loomis, with a large portion of the church who adopted this new belief, withdrew from the church and organized the Baptist Ecclesiastical Society who proceeded at once to create facilities for public worship. A new meeting house was erected in 1828 "with a steeple" which is now known as the Hill Church.

The Congregational Church, greatly weakened in number but not in spirit continued its independent existence across the common, while the Baptist Church grew and flourished until approximately 1873 when South Willington began showing prospects of becoming the industrial center of the town. A thread mill had been established by Gardiner Hall, Sr. which attracted a number of new families to this section of Willington.

From 1876 until the completion of the Clara Hall Elliott Memorial Church in 1911, church services were held on the second floor of the general store in South Willington as well as at the Hill Church with one minister serving both churches.

The Congregational Church, beset by financial problems and diminishing membership, steadily declined until finally the religious stream which divided itself in 1828, returned once more into a single channel in 1911.

The steps which led to the federation were many and not without serious heart searching on the parts of those who guided the reunion process.

The Congregationalists, many of whom were descendants of the early

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(Steps that led to Federation (continued))

settlers, voted to form a "union with the Baptist church on the basis of freedom of choice in method of baptism." Thus, the churches resolved to meet the increasing problems of a new day with a united strength.

The two people who are credited with guiding the process of federation are Rev. Earl Darrow, then the Baptist minister and George V. Smith who was a Congregationalist and a lawyer.

This proved to be the first such federation in the history of Connecticut.

Footnote: The Historical Society has the original handwritten Article of Federation as part of its holdings. These articles were accepted unanimously by both churches without any changes until 1926. In 1958 the name was changed from Federated Churches of Willington to the Federated Church of Willington thus signifying that the Congregational and Baptist Churches were no longer separate entities within the Federation.

#### RECENT GIFTS

1. A collection of original poems (typewritten) by Rev. Charles H. Brown was given by Sarah Whitman of Willington. Rev. Brown was the minister of the Baptist Church from 1890-1899. His widow, Ida Brown, lived in the Kline homestead and Ernest Kline has a number of Rev. Brown's books which are a testimonial to his intellectual ability.

In an article following his death it was written "Mr. Brown had a wonderful memory, was a ready writer of prose and of poetry. When the inspiration was on he wrote poem after poem without effort, like water bubbling from a spring, a score, perhaps, or more, and page after page of his dramas, of which he has several unpublished, his writings being of a higher order than most the popular taste.

His strongest intellectual point, as he thought himself, was history, and he has for years been at work on a Universal History of the World, that he has lately been revising."

2. A paper ballot listing the candidates who were running for office in 1945,

from Eleanor DuPilka, Town Clerk.

The Ballot instructions are: "This ballot shall be marked with a pencil having black lead. To vote a straight ticket make a Cross-Mark X within the proper circle, thereby voting for all the nominees of the designated party. Any other marks than the cross-mark 'X' used for voting will render this ballot void. If you tear, deface or wrongly mark this ballot, return it and get another."

(It also instructs the voter on how to vote a split ticket.)

Wilbert C. Ruby, Clinton A. Church and Merritt L. Usher were running for Selectmen; Leon Woodworth for town clerk, unopposed.

#### LEASE RENEWED

The Board of Selectmen have renewed the lease for use of the old Town Clerk's office.

Provisions were made for a Rehabilitation Officer to use the space, possibly twice a month, since the Federal government is making available low interest loans to people who want to make their homes more energy efficient and a place to consult with applicants is needed.

The town will incur the cost of heating and electricity during the time the office is used by the Rehabilitation Officer.

#### MONEY INVESTED

At the request of the members of the Society, Frances Daley, treasurer has invested \$2000 for a period of one year at 12% rate of interest. A gift of four linen placemats with scenes of Tolland's historical buildings were received as a result of the investment.

Ernest Kline will investigate how these placemats were made and by whom, since the Society might be interested in using the same idea to raise money using Willington scenes. They would also be suitable for framing.