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Willington, Connecticut November 1984

No. 2

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

Historic Gardens and Landscapes at Home and Abroad.

Rudy Favretti is familiar to many of us as a Charter Member of the Willington Historical Society. He is a Professor of Landscape Design of the University of Connecticut and has written books on the subject. In the course of his studies he has visited gardens here in America and abroad, and has taken photographs of many of them which he will show to us at the November 16th meeting. A resident of Mansfield, he is a member of the Mansfield Historical Society. Why not take the time to "smell the flowers" after your shopping trip to the St. Jude Bazaar across the street.

COME AND BRING A FRIEND

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Center School

Date: November 16, 1984

A REVIEW OF MODERNIZATION IN A NEW ENGLAND TOWN: A HISTORY OF WILLINGTON, CONNECTICUT. By Ronald F. Demers.

(Willington Historical Society, 1983. Pp. 432. \$19.50)

Was written by Paul Todesco, a former President of the Bay State Historical League. After a discourse on old and new local histories, Mr. Todesco wrote as follows:

Ronald Demers, a public school teacher trained as a Historian, has written the text and furnished the Historical Insight, while Isabel B. Weigold, Chairperson of the Willington Historical Society Sites and Research Committee, has provided the basic research, as a collaborative work, the book reflects a certain uncovness, but it is an interesting and important venture in the field of local town history.

As a Graduate Student, Demers studied with Richard D. Brown, author of Modernization: The Transformation of American Life (1976), who introduced him to his model of American History and was "instrumental in (Demers) obtaining this writing project." The big step forward, however, was the application of Brown's Modernization Model to the town that gave birth to Jared Sparks, America's "First Secular Professor of History".

In developing his Willington Model, Demers has chosen to follow the traditional organizational pattern of a local

Review - History of Willington (continued)

history, with individual chapters on Geography, Land, Economics (instead of Business), Religion, etc. Although this seemed cumbersome at first, it works reasonably well. As an ordinary rural community changing into a suburban reflection of urban America, Willington is like many other New England towns caught up in the throes of change. This study will give Willingtonians and others a better understanding of what happened to that community, locally and in relation to National Affairs. The best chapters deal with economic change and industrial development in Willington, home of the Gardiner Hall Jr. Thread Company. One also has the opportunity to see Brown's model at work and to compare Willington's development with that of other communities.

It should be noted that while the book is well designed, simple, and clean looking, it is poorly edited. There are too many spelling and grammatical errors. Moreover, given the current technical competence of word processing, one would have expected the publisher could have used a justified margin.

Probably the most important criticism of the book, however, is that the sweep of its argument often overcomes the reader. The paucity of data, as is frequently the case in town research, and the overutilization of newspaper sources result in a level of generalization that often approaches whimsy and detracts from the study's valuable insights. This is, nonetheless, a work well worth the effort. Demers should be complimented for his courage in trying to apply a sophisticated methodological model to Willington. Richard Jenson, who has used the modernization model at the state level, has commented that it was "risky" for him to work the idea into Illinois: A History (1978). Demers might have done better if he had made greater reference to that study of Jenson's earlier works. Even so, Demers has done a service to the field of local town history, and my only hope is that others will follow this pioneering effort to break the lock on the traditional approach to a field deserving

of more ambitious undertakings.

This review was taken from "The New England Quarterly Book Reviews".

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM ON 4-H FOLLOW-UP

As an outcome of the September meeting program which celebrated the 50th Anniversary of 4-H, a group of people who had been active in 4-H in Willington met on Oct. 5 to discuss plans for compiling a History and/or Chronology of 4-H activities and participants in the Town. An advertisement has been placed in the Stafford Reminder asking for further information or memorabilia. Since there was a fire in the TAC Building a few years ago which destroyed numerous records, anything that you have might be valuable. Attending the Oct. meeting, were Elizabeth Robertson, Frances Daley, Harriet Marco, Betty Berovicka, Emelie Kalbac, Thelma King and Louis Zeieck. Another meeting will be held Nov. 9 at the Center School.

Following, for those who were not able to attend the meeting, is a Chronology of National and State 4-H events from "4-H in American Idea" Chronology, p. 340.

National 4-H Events

- 1911 - Four leaf clover emblem adopted, with the H's standing for Head, Heart, Hand and Health.
- 1914 - Cooperative Extension Service created, Smith Lever act.
- 1918 - The term 4-H Club first appeared on a federal document.
- 1922 - First National Club Congress and Fourth Annual Club Tour -- name given to the event in Chicago.
- 1923 - International 4-H Leadership Training School at the Eastern States Exposition established by Horace A. Moses.
- 1924 - Four Leaf Clover emblem was patented.
- 1927 - First National Club Camp -- tents on the grounds of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.
- 1927 - National 4-H Pledge written.

National 4-H Events (continued)

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- 1929 - First National 4-H Song Book
L-H Club Sunday first observed.
- 1936 - National 4-H enrollment passed
the million mark.
- 1948 - Extension established the Inter-
national Farm Youth Exchange
(IFYE).
- 1959 - National 4-H Center opened in
Chevy Chase, Maryland.
- 4-H IN CONNECTICUT
- 1912 - Boys Corn Club. Statewide.
- 1913 - A.J. Brundage hired to "go over
to Mansfield and start a Corn
Club". He served 35 years. The
Mansfield Boys Club became the
forerunner of all 4-H clubs in
Connecticut.
- 1913 or 1914 - Storrs Sewing Club.
20 members from several miles
around.
First State Homemakers Club.
- 1914 to 1924 (?) - Miss Estelle Sprague
Assistant State Club Organizer.
- 1915 - First Egg producing contest.
First 4-H County Agent employed
in Connecticut - Fairfield County.
Leonard M. Johnson Garden or
Achievement Clubs - a few paid
leaders.
- 1916 - Northern Atlantic Boys and Girls
Exposition at Eastern States
Exposition. 130 Conn. members
participated. Camp Vail became
a fixture at the Exposition
within the next few years 4-H in
every county in Connecticut.
- 1918 - 4-H Demonstration team contest
first occurred.
- 1919 - First Junior Short Course, Conn.
Agricultural College, in March.
- 1920 - Miss Elsie Trabue became Assistant
State 4-H Club Leader. She served
over 25 years.
Early in 1920's Baby Beef show
at the Exposition.
- 1922 - First Baby Beef Show - Charter
Oak Fair, Hartford.
Lane delegate to first National
Club Congress, Chicago - Mildred
Richardson, Canton.
- 1923 - First Purchased Heifer Club,
Middletown.
- 1924 - First 4-H Club Round-Up. Dis-
continued in the 1930's. In
part its place was taken by the
Youth Program of the Conn. State
Development Commission.
- 1926 - College 4-H Club started. Spons-
ored 4-H Week end. Date for
this not recorded.
- 1927 - Connecticut sent 2 boys and
2 girls to National Club Camp.
Marie Collins, Margaret Magnuson,
Marsden Bacon, Jr. and Vito
Luciani.
- 1927 - General Assembly voted \$2,000
for each county specifically for
a worker with boys and girls,
and Donald C. Gaylord came to
Tolland.
- 1928 - First County 4-H Camp in Windham.
- 1929 - Tolland County 4-H Round-Up in
Storrs.
- 1930 - Early 1930's all Countys had
Senior 4-H Clubs.
- 1931 - One in seven students at Conn.
State College (?) was a former
4-H member.
- 1933 - Nearly 6,000 members and 350
Clubs in Connecticut.
- By 1940 - An Agricultural and a Home-
making agent for each county.
- 1948 - A.J. Brundage retired.
- 1952 - 2,304 boys and 3,420 girls re-
ported on 10,667 projects;
1748 local leaders.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

- Nov. 15-16 - St. Jude Bazaar - 4:00 -
8:00 PM
- Nov. 16 - Rudy Favretti - Historic
Gardens and Landscapes at Home
and Abroad.
- Mar. 15 - Helen Parnell on "Teddy Bears"
- May 17 - King Concert.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the September meeting, Ray Daley was
re-elected Vice President, and Harold
Waigold was re-elected Secretary of
the Society.

ST. JUDE'S BAZAAR

The Bazaar will be held on Thursday, November 15 and Friday, November 16 4:00 - 8:00 P.M. at St. Jude Center. The Society will have a table with some new things to sell. A new design of Note Paper is available, along with assorted boxes of five designs. There will be ceramic tiles with a Town Hall design at \$3.75, maps of Willington and of course, the History of Willington. The woodcut design calendars so popular last year will be on sale again. Any donations of gifts or ornaments will be very welcome.

MEMBERSHIP SHEET ATTACHED.

ANOTHER THANK YOU TO ISABEL WEIGOLD --

Again we wish to express our THANKS to Isabel for five years of loyal and faithful service in editing this Newsletter. Cooperation, inspiration and information which she has received will continue with the new Editor. Please call Thelma King 429-2913 if you have anything of interest for the Newsletter.

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