

**SEPTEMBER PROGRAM**

There will be a Pot Luck Supper at 6:30 P.M. on Friday, September 19, 1986. A meat and vegetable casserole, salad, or dessert will taste better if we share it with our friends! Come, share, and enjoy.

Following the Pot Luck supper, Harriet Marco will share with us her slides and experiences on her trip to Europe last summer. She will take us with her from her day in Brussels, down the Rhine with its castles, and past the rock of Lorelei. She has slides of Heidelberg, Munich, Vienna, the Austrian Alps, and many scenes in and around Salzburg. It is a rare treat to have such an interesting presentation.

TIME: 6:30 P.M.

PLACE: Center School

DATE: September 19, 1986

**WILLINGTON INDUSTRIES**

A series of articles will be published in the Hourglass this year dealing with Willington's industries. The articles will be taken from a thesis written in 1976 by John Goodrich who was a graduate of Yale University and lived in Willington during his childhood and school years.

**Early Industries**

For approximately 170 years after the settlement of Willington in 1727, her resources of timber and water power played a very important part in

the operation of the town's economy. Today, however, the supply of virgin and even second growth timber have long since been cut, leaving the inferior grades of third and in some cases even fourth growth timber. Water power which was supplied by the town's numerous swiftly flowing stream was of the utmost importance until the advent of modern power sources (i.e. steam, electricity, gas) which have replaced water power.

The early industries of the town were largely of the household form designed for the specific purpose of supplying the immediate needs of the family. A good elaboration of this general picture is given by a publication on the town's history which states: "The first industries were connected with the establishment of the home. Saw mills were early erected as the land was cleared for cultivation. Grist mills were needed as the farmers began to grow grain for their families and their stock. Sheep raising demanded fulling and carding; for the transportation of products to any extent was out of the question, and most of the manufacturing was done at home. Quite an important industry was the raising of sil worms, requiring such painstaking care as the housewives of that day were willing to give, and being profitably carried on even when on a small scale. An impetus was given to this industry in 1766, when by



vote of the Connecticut colony, one half ounce of mulberry seed was sent to each parish in the colony and a bounty was offered on mulberry trees and raw silk. Spinning, weaving and knitting for the large families kept the house mothers busy through the long winters." A very important function neglected in the above quotation was that carried on by the blacksmith. At this time according to the town historian, George V. Smith, one of the major roles in the town's economy was played by the blacksmith. He made the nails needed for building houses, metal pots and pans, fireplace equipment, farm equipment, and many of the other necessities of the community. In short, the blacksmith was a main pillar in supporting the town's early economy.

As the town's population began to grow, new businesses sprang up to take their place alongside those already established and in some cases replaced their predecessors. The early nineteenth century found the greatest concentration of wealth in the northeastern section of the town. Here one of the first woolen mills in the state had been established at Tinkerville (Forestville). After this mill burned down in 1830, a silk business was established at the same place. The water power here was also harnessed for sawing lumber for plow beams. Later the firm of Charles Morrison and William Weedon was formed to manufacture spool thread. This establishment employed some twenty men and women and was among the first to introduce the factory system into the Willington economy. The spools were not made at Tinkerville, but were purchased from Massachusetts or another section of town called Sharp's Mills\*, at which a shop for manufacturing spools was built in 1830.

(to be continued)

\*Sharp's Mills is the area where the Masinda's now live (Corner of Adamec and Kollar Roads).

#### REMINDER

Attractive gold seals to be placed in your HISTORY OF WILLINGTON are still available at the Town Clerk's office or at the Library at Hall School at no charge. They will also be available at the annual meeting. These seals signify that the book won a national award from the American Association of State and Local History.

#### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Frances Daley and Thelma King were appointed as nominating committee to fill the positions of Vice-President and Treasurer which expire

this year. They were charged with bringing a slate to be voted on at the annual meeting. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

#### ORAL HISTORY

Gigi Booth has completed about 14 interviews of our senior citizens. The tapes are currently being transcribed by Isabel Weigold, and this combined with slides of Willington scenes, already collected, will make a fascinating program. Gigi plans to continue interviewing this fall, so if you know of someone who would make a good subject for an interview, please get in touch with her.

#### COMMENTARY

Thom King performed for the May meeting of the Historical Society before a delighted audience. Many of those present were former teachers and friends who have followed Thom's career since he left Windham High School. Thom presented music of contemporary composers as well as old American songs written by Connecticut people.

Thom has sung with the Connecticut Opera Company, taught music to elementary school and middle school students in Southington, and last fall sang with the North Carolina Opera Company, an experience he called "wonderful". He has also performed with the Santa Fe Opera, the Texas Opera, Chautauqua Opera, the Green Mountain Guild, and many local opera groups and churches. He is currently singing with the Miami Opera in Miami, Florida.

Thom says he wants to reach the point where he can take his pick of roles. "Age is not a factor in the opera," he said. "In fact, the longer you stick it out, the better your chances." We wish Thom a successful career in the operatic field and hope he will come back to his home town again and delight his audience once more.

#### COMING EVENTS

Sept. 19 - Pot Luck Supper followed by Harriet Marco's European tour.

Sept. 20 - Association of Gravestone Studies, Connecticut Branch, will meet at the Plainfield Cemetery, Cemetery Road at 10:00 A.M. Bring your lunch and hear Fred Fredette talk about early stones and their carvers.

(Nov. 14 Tentative program on the Pope bicycle manufactured in Hartford, CT. A speaker is available through the Conn. Historical Society who has a series of slides to illustrate the talk.)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Willington Historical Society - 1986-1987

Individual Membership .....	\$2.50
Family (Husband-Wife) Membership .....	5.00
Corporate Membership .....	10.00

Type of membership desired: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of member(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to the Willington Historical Society and

mail with this slip to: Mrs. Frances Daley  
Glass Factory Road  
West Willington, CT. 06279

Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I do not wish to join the Society, but would like to continue receiving THE HOURGLASS for \$1.50 a year, which I enclose.

DUES ARE PAYABLE BY SEPTEMBER 30.

THANK YOU.

ENCOURAGE A FRIEND TO JOIN ALSO!