



WILLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Hourglass - A quarterly newsletter of the Willington Historical Society

August 2018

Volume XLVI No. 2

**The Willington Historical Society
Annual Meeting
And
Program
Tuesday, September 18th
7:00 p.m.
Town Office Building
Common Room
40 Old Farms Rd.**

Please join us as we celebrate an eventful year of progress in the life of the Society and the Daniel Glazier Tavern. Business to be conducted at the meeting, includes the election of officers:

Vice President— 2 year term
Secretary—2 year term

Appointments to positions on the Executive Board include:

Program Chair, Ways & Means Chair,
Publicity Chair, Buildings & Grounds Chair

At the Program following the Business meeting, the Society's President, Bob Shabot will discuss and display his collection of Native American arrowheads.



shutterstock.com · 258809300

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR
AN INTERESTING
EVENING**

Please join the Willington Historical Society at our Annual Meeting on September 18th at 7:00 p.m.. In addition to the election of Officers, and the display and talk about Native American arrowheads, there will be a discussion of the recently acquired report about renovations to the Glazier Tavern that recommends upgrades to the building that will make it compliant with the Building Code. When these corrections are completed the Tavern will be able to be used for local functions and events.



Recently acquired 19th century wash stand and reproduction Bennington pitcher and bowl set.

From The President's Desk



“Any society can survive only so long as its members are willing to contribute to the common good. The production of *The Hourglass* is one example of such a contribution. For their time and creative energy we express thanks to the Newsletter committee. It is hoped that this newsletter will provide an instrument to maintain communication between our society's membership and the local community at large. More than a forum to display their progress, it is hoped it will act as a stimulus to prompt contributions of information and enthusiasm.”

I borrowed the above words from the first newsletter the Society published in November of 1973 by then President Paul Blakely. This fall my point to our members and community readers is that those words ring as true now as they did then. In order to survive and prosper the Society needs people to pitch in, volunteer and lend a hand. The Society has shouldered quite an undertaking with the management of the Glazier Tavern property, as well as keeping up with our mission of archiving materials being donated and maintaining a line of historical communication with our members and the Willington community.

As we approach September and the Society's Annual Meeting we are still in search of a Programing person and a Publicity person. In the near future we may also be in the market for someone to manage the Society's website, one of the electronic lifelines we need to reach out beyond the borders of Willington. The website allows families with past connections to town to be able to reach us with requests and receive genealogical answers, or contact us for making donations, both material and monetary.

Consider lending a hand, perhaps even attend the Annual Meeting to learn more about the Society. You might even get me to tell you the story of how the Fenton River got its name; up until the mid 18th century it was known as the East Branch of the Willimantic River.

Thanks for your consideration,
Bob Shabot

PLEASE HELP

IN ANY WAY YOU CAN!

Your mailing address label indicates your membership expiration date. If your label reads “9/2018” or earlier, please consider renewing now. We would love to see all labels read “9/2019”

TAVERN TIMES

With the fall season on our doorstep, there are several reminders and some information for our members and community neighbors.

First off, the Society's monthly meetings will return to the Willington Town Office Building starting in September. Please check the Society's or the Town of Willington's websites for dates and time. Meetings are usually held the third Tuesday of the month. Our monthly meetings are open to anyone interested in the history of Willington and the ongoing activities of the Historical Society.

As an off-shoot of the Willington Garden Club, there was an interest to research and plan for a period kitchen garden on the East side of the Tavern building. Anyone interested in joining this effort should contact Pam Wheeler at 860-429-9804 for more information.



During the summer, the Society was able to purchase a second metal fireback for our taproom fireplace. The previous fireback was moved to the kitchen hearth. Now the brick work in both fireplaces will be protected from erosion caused by the heat of the fires.

Speaking about fall and the upcoming heating season, the most pressing issue for the Society, at present, is the replacement of our, once faithful, fifty-five year old steam boiler at the Tavern. Last spring at the end of our heating season the boiler failed. DONE! A local contractor, Heritage Oil, has been chosen and work is progressing as this newsletter goes to press.

Because this is an unforeseen major expense, the Society will be reaching out to our members, friends and neighbors in the community, seeking donations to help offset the approximate \$8,000 cost of the new system.

Donations have helped defray the total cost of large projects that the Society has undertaken in the past in order to maintain our 1815 tavern building. We're hoping that this next fundraising effort will be as successful as the roofing project last year, where donations matched half the cost of the new roof. We're presently working on a fundraising campaign to address our need and recognize donors for their support of this latest project of the Society.

Willington Common and Meeting House Green

Prior to the opening of Glazier's tavern, and the opening of the Windham and Mansfield Turnpike and Tolland County Turnpike, there had been a renewed focus on the area in and around Willington Hill. In the 1780s, Tolland County was formed and licenses for public houses were granted by the County Superior Court. In Willington, there were renewed calls for the repair of the Meeting House. By the 1790s debate turned to building a new Congregational Meeting House as the old Meeting House was in a state of disrepair. Town meeting locations were split between the Baptist Meeting House on Village Hill and the Congregational Meeting House on Willington Hill.

Town Meeting records document the discussions about the Meeting House and activity around the Green; Town land records show who was involved in that activity. In 1796 the Town voted to give Miner Grant liberty to build a store on the Green south of the Congregational Meeting House. In 1797, Thomas Peck was allowed to set up a store near the Meeting House

in a building he bought in 1792. The description in the deed indicated that it was the original home lot for the Reverend Gideon Noble. This would be the same lot where Deacon Turner's Greek Revival was built in 1849. In October 1797 the Boston Turnpike (Route 44) was chartered and open for business and perhaps coincidentally, a new road across town that would connect to it was being discussed.

Working from the Public Records of the State, one might assume that planning for the Tolland County Turnpike began in 1800; however, local discussion of the route is recorded in Town Meeting records in 1795 with mention of a proposed new road from Fall Brook Hill to Benjamin Nye's. Using present day landmarks that would be Wenberg Hill to West Willington. In other words, the road would run from the Willimantic River to the Ashford town line. Interestingly, this route is shown on Mathew Carey's 1796 map of Connecticut included in Carey's Guthrie Atlas. The Carey map would suggest that the route through Willington was well known as a primary road leading from the Tolland Courthouse.

According to Town Meeting records, the plan was to make the road four rods (66 feet) wide a mile in each direction from the center of town and two rods (33 feet) wide the rest of the way. The width of the road was the legal Right-of-Way, not the actual traveled surface. The width of the section of this road along the Green on Willington Hill was ten rods wide in 1730. Even though the right-of-way width varied over the years, the course of the route along the Green was essentially the same as shown on Josiah Conant's 1726 plot of Willington, the road that came to be known as Wolcott's Road. Of course, as the records suggest, by the time any action is voted on for these kinds of local projects, there have been years of planning and discussion.

What led up to the seemingly recent activity on Willington Hill? Perhaps a look back at what had been in the works along Major Wolcott's Road would offer some clues.

Mark Palmer

Historian, Town of Willington

A Tavern on the Green –Part 3

A Town Center

In the 1790s, Willington Hill was experiencing something of a renewal. Some thirty years earlier, circa 1766, well before a new road, some new stores and a new Meeting House on the Hill were discussed, there was talk of moving the Congregational Meeting House to the center of town, considered by some at the time to be East Willington. John Merrick called the Fenton River part of town, the city. East Willington, with its collection of mills and shops was a center of economic activity. In 1772, the Town voted to build and maintain seven bridges in town, five on the Fenton River and two on Roaring Brook, all on roads associated with mills.

By the 1770s, the Fenton River powered a majority of the town's saw, grist, fulling and woolen mills, forges and water powered shops. There was a malt house, as well as shoe and comb shops. Many of these businesses continued operation well into the 1800s. The list of mills on the Fenton River started upstream at Captain Ebenezer Heath's saw mill on Turnpike Road (Center Turnpike, the Colonial era old Woodstock to Hartford Road).

Further downstream at Forestville were a woolen factory, carding and fulling mills, saw mill and blacksmith. These were just off Tinkerville Road, on the old Union Road to Ashford that led to the Westford Congregational Society Meeting House. Samuel Stiles, was one of a long list of owner/operators for a saw and grist mill at Liska Road. Gould Stiles apparently added a forge. The site was sold to Daniel Dimock and then to Origin Dimock.

The Weston mills and Samuel Duntons forge were further downstream, just above Wolcott's Road (Route 74) where it crossed the Fenton River. John Weston started out with a malt house and saw mill on Georges Brook. He added a saw and grist mill on the Fenton River which was later operated by his son James. Downstream, just below Wolcott's Road were Joseph Brown's mills. Clement Topliff was given liberty to build a mill abutting Brown and he apparently used Brown's sluiceway. Further downstream was Ebenezer Heath Senior's saw and grist mill in Daleville. By the late 1780s, Roger Wolcott's 1726 road across town had become the main thoroughfare connecting West Willington, Willington Hill and East Willington.

By the mid-1790s Willington Hill was connected to all the major mill sites in town. From the Fenton River east to connections north on the old Stafford Road, Eldredge Mills Road led to the 1750s Nehemiah Parker mill site that became the Eldredge Mills complex on Roaring Brook. Further north were the Lillibridge mills on the Elias Lee mill site near the Stafford town line. The roads south from Willington Hill pointed to Thomas Peck and Daniel Gurley's mill on the Willimantic River and Ebenezer Heath's mills in Daleville. West of Willington Hill saw mills on Conant Brook such as the Abel Johnson, later Robert Sharp's saw mill and his brother-in-law James Holt's woodworking shop and the Johnson Thread works in South Willington. But by 1799, Willington Hill was apparently considered the center of town again and probably an ideal place for a new Public House.

As 1800 was heralded in, Willington Hill had a new Congregational Meeting House on land purchased from Abel Holmes at the present corner of Jared Sparks Road and Common Road. The old Meeting House had stood just a few rods to the south. Town meetings were now held in the basement of the new Meeting House. The turnpike road ran past the Green and plans for another were in the works.

One question remains, if the Glazier Tavern was one stop on a stage road, where were the other stops? Where were the other taverns up and down the line? And for the historical sleuth, where would we find ^{clues} about the connections, their dates of operation and locations?

Mark Palmer

Historian, Town of Willington

To be continued...

The following businesses have been generous in their support of the Historical Society's efforts. Please join us in thanking them and consider patronizing their business. Let them know you saw their name here!



ANYTHING PRINTED
Copy Center

PAMELA VARHOLY
331 RIVER ROAD
P.O. BOX 376
WILLINGTON, CT 06279
pam@anythingprinted.org
www.anythingprinted.org

860.429.1244
855.656.7706
FAX 860.429.1249

Norman J. Barry
274 Grant Hill Road
Tolland, CT 06084



Phone 860-966-3148
Email: barryfamily101@comcast.net
CT Reg. # 0607777

Kitchen & Bath Remodeling
Custom Built Cabinets
Interior Trim
Additions

EVERLASTING WOODS
Artistic Furniture
www.everlastingwoods.com



Ted DeMers
860-429-7267
info@everlastingwoods.com

Willington, CT.

KEN UPPLING



HERITAGE OIL, INC.
SOLAR • HOME HEATING OIL
FURNACE & BOILER REPLACEMENTS
24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE • HEATING & A.C. INSTALLATION

860-429-0259
860-649-3434
FAX: 860-429-5962
Heritage Oil 1.com

17 RIVER ROAD
WILLINGTON, CT 06279
S1-386493
ST1-307820

Signs of All Kinds LLC.

Factory & Showroom
227 Progress Drive
Manchester, CT 06042

Geoff W. Prusak
Vice President
geoff@signsofallkinds.com

860-649-1989
800-214-4449
Fax 860-649-2256

www.signsofallkinds.com



Join us as we move forward but keep our eyes on the past

Yes, I will help at the Willington Historical Society as a:

Member Volunteer Donor

I'm interested in:

Tavern restoration/preservation

Yard upkeep/development

Archive maintenance

Programing/publicity

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone _____

Email: _____

(OCCASIONALLY, WE MAY SEND INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PERTAINING TO PROGRAMS AND EVENTS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY. WE WILL NOT SHARE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS.)

Membership dues for October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019 are available for:
Individual \$20. ___ Family \$30. ___ Student \$10. ___ Corporate \$50. ___ Lifetime \$250. ___

I would like to make a tax deductible donation to the Willington Historical Society.
Amount: _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE WILLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DO YOU WISH TO RECEIVE OUR NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL IN LIEU OF PAPER COPY? YES ___ NO ___
(Advantages = color photos, one of the first to receive it and saves postage and copy costs!)

Mail to: **Betty Robertson, Membership Chair, Willington Historical Society**
P.O. Box 214, Willington, CT 06279

WHS Contact Information

President: Bob Shabot - rbshabot@icloud.com

Vice President: Mark Masinda - mmasinda@charter.net

Treasurer: Sue Schur - sue.b.schur@snet.net

Secretary: Paul Schur - paul.m.schur@snet.net

Committee Chairs:

Acquisitions: Lisa Ferriere

Membership: Betty Robertson

Program: This could be you!

Publicity: This could be you!

Ways & Means: This could be you!

Website manager: Marion Dooling

Town Historian: Mark Palmer- historian@willingtonct.org

Ass't Historian (genealogy): Paul Weigold- pweigold52@yahoo.com

Email: willingtonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Website: www.willingtonhistoricalsocietyct.org

Willington Historical Society

P.O. 214

Willington, CT 06279