



WILLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Hourglass - A quarterly newsletter of the Willington Historical Society

June 2017

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The Masinda Button Shop –

By Paul Weigold

Well, it is Year #2 of the “Button Shop Rebuild”. The hard work of reconstruction of the exterior is over and the fun stuff has begun. The first thing that needed to be tackled was the open floor where we had been using the floor joists to jump on and balance for the longest time. It was great to get the floor down and completed so we could shift our focus to getting the machine benches in place and the machines back in their former homes once again.

With that done the focus became the machines and how they were used in the production of buttons. We let the machines tell their story of how they worked. Within a short time span we were able to get the vast majority of the machines cleaned up enough and turning to make a button or two using hand-power. The mill was water-powered in 1903 but the power from the small brook was not always available. I did find evidence of an electric motor which was used near the end of the mill’s operation.

Electric power was used around 1929, and the shop closed in 1934. What about the preceding years? That question may have been answered when Mark and I were at a local antique tractor



Masinda’s Button Shop

show. One particular engine had a water cooling system which Mark recognized as similar to something in the scrap pile at the mill. Upon further investigation it turned out it is the cooling system for a 4 horsepower International Harvester Co. famous hit and miss engine. I ordered a reprint of the manual and in the parts section found tools pictured that were also found in the scrap pile. This discovery leads us to believe that the missing link is an old engine. There was also a 12 foot shaft that went through the wall that I suspected was for a blower dust removal system because a duct was nearby. *(continued on page 2)*

TAVERN TIMES

Roof Project Update ...

Where we stand as of May 2017:

Since last September the Willington Historical Society started asking for the public's support to re-roof the historic Glazier tavern. Your generous support has raised \$5,072 in donations. For the Society's part, we applied for a 50/50 matching grant from the 1772 Foundation, administered by the CT Trust for Historic Preservation. The matching grant would cover 1/2 of the roof cost.

Good News! ... often comes as an email these days and YES, the Society was awarded the 50/50 matching grant, from the 1772 Foundation, in the amount of \$8,975.



As a final push for fund raising a number of town residents have expressed a desire to provide financial support when we were ready to start the project. That Time Is Now! There is \$3,903 left to raise for the 'other' 50% of this project. Consider making part of Willington's history yours!

We are grateful for these neighbors who have generously supported the cause: Betty Robertson, Sue and Paul Schur, Willington VFW Post, David and Margaret Gankofski, Marjorie and Lynn Brown, Christine Psathas and Bob Shabot, Chopeta Lyons & Mark Palmer, Lisa Ferriere, Pam and Sam Wheeler, Anne and Dave Sylvia, Tom and Eileen Smith, Suzanne Chapman, Tom and Betsy Treiber, Sarah and Michael Smith, Chris and Kathy Demers with a matching grant from United Technologies, Ken Uppling/Heritage Oil, Phil and Jeanne Monty, Syd and Mary Goodrich, Kathy and Bob Lisiewski, E.J. and Doris Letsch, Rudy and Joy Favretti, Jim Harvey, and several donors who wish to remain anonymous.

Any shortfall in fund raising will be funded from the Society's Museum fund, to assure the roof is replaced in 2017

It will be a wonderful thing to be able to say that we have a secure roof over our heads.

THANK YOU!

From The President's Desk



Identity Matters

The Historical Society wants and needs to have people know where we are! If people know where we are, they have a better idea of what we're doing.

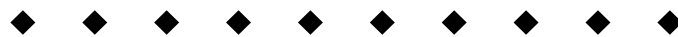
As the keepers of the 1815 Glazier Tavern, the Willington Historical Society is now identified! Our recently erected tavern sign, on Route 74, at the west end of the Willington Town Green, tells travelers who and where we are. In addition, it identifies what the building was used for originally.

Look for the sign when you're in the area.

In their time, signs identifying taverns were painted in a manner as not to be missed by passing travelers.

I hope we've lived up to those standards.

Bob Shabot, President




The Masinda Button Shop *(continued)*

It could have been an engine house, but unfortunately there is not much left to tell us what the layout would have been.

Power in the old shops was transmitted by long steel shafts known as line shafts. These were usually up in the ceiling and flat leather belts were connected to each machine. In this shop, the main shaft which was connected to the prime mover (water wheel, a motor or engine) is at floor level and is belted to the 3 overhead line shafts. The longest was 20 feet long going from wall to wall. The shaft runs in a lead tin Babbitt bearing that runs in an oil bath. If the oil is not watched the bearing would wear out and need replacing. In this case all but one bearing was in need of replacement or repair, a total of 10 bearings. It was clear that this was the reason to close the shop. On the shop door was the epitaph, a penciled note: "Bill Holub, backer, Oct. 6, 1934, 12:30 p.m. and Reo Forgette, backer."

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!

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2016-2017 Membership Application

Annual membership from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017

STUDENT	\$10	
INDIVIDUAL	\$20	
FAMILY	\$30	
CORPORATE	\$50	
LIFE (Individual or Family)	\$250	
DONATION (tax deductible)		
TOTAL		

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

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

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