



WILLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Hourglass - A quarterly newsletter of the Willington Historical Society

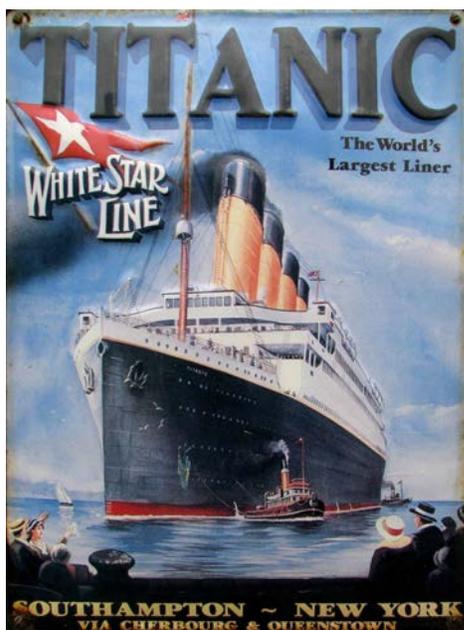
March 2018

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The Willington Historical Society
presents an informational program

The Titanic and everything you needed to know but may not have had the time to ask.

Thursday, April 19th, 2018
7:00 p.m.
Community Room
Willington Public Library
Ruby Road



**Please join the Society for a presentation
to recognize the 106th anniversary of the
sinking of the ship, Titanic: a program of
memorabilia and reflection.**

**To be held April 19, 2018 at 7:00 pm in the
Willington Library Community Room.**

On display will be a collection of artifacts
pertaining to and from the actual ship, RMS
Titanic. The infamous passenger liner of the
White Star Line, once billed as unsinkable,
struck an iceberg and sank on her maiden
voyage across the Atlantic Ocean on April 15,
1912.

Our presenters, Anita
and Ernie Eldridge
have been 'collectors'
of Titanic memorabilia
for years. Their interest in the story and history
of the Titanic has led them to enjoy sharing
this special collection and experiences with
the public. That interest led them to be
members of the 1996 expedition to the Titanic
site to raise a piece of the ship's hull.



**This informative program is free and open to
the public!**

From The President's Desk



As we welcome Spring's warmer weather and longer days, the Historical Society has a few new items on our schedule for this season.

First, we're planning on having the Glazier Tavern open on Tuesdays during the Summer. Depending on the number of volunteers that are willing to help, hours could be most of the day or only several hours in the afternoon. Either way, look for the 'open' sign at the bottom of our tavern sign in the front yard. Consider becoming a volunteer, by contacting us by email.

Another exciting possibility, this season, is the development of a Kitchen Garden for the Tavern grounds. The recently formed Willington Garden Club is at the heart of this proposed project. A number of club members are interested in working with the Historical Society to begin research on various period designs and appropriate plantings. This would certainly be an attractive addition to the property.

Finally, the Society has engaged the services of a Historical Architect to conduct a building code review of the historic tavern building. This study will identify any building code irregularities and suggest remedies for possible issues, while considering the historic integrity of the structure.

This review is essential as we move closer to having the building open on a more regular basis in order to better engage our town residents.

Hope to See You.
Bob Shabot, President

Kitchen Garden Planning for Glazier Tavern By Pam Wheeler

Our Historical Society has long wanted to enhance the interest, beauty, and historical authenticity of the Glazier Tavern grounds by adding appropriate gardens. But, as we all know, ever since we received the building there have been many demanding projects needing attention, and new gardens have been postponed. Now, with major building construction completed and with offers of help from other community members, we are again talking about creating a kitchen/herb garden for the Tavern.

Did you know that Willington has a new, home-grown Garden Club? It was formed last year with the purpose of improving the plantings around our Town Office Building. I am a member of both groups and have asked if the Garden Club would be interested in helping the Historical Society with this project. While the Historical Society is not ready to take on another project officially, many of their members are enthusiastic about working with the Garden Club to get the Tavern garden started. What an opportunity--now, it's up to us to get this going! Here are some tasks to think about:

*Research appropriate plantings and characteristics of gardens for an early 19th century New England country tavern. A possible field trip to see examples of such gardens in nearby historical settings—ideally with a knowledgeable guide, ideally during the growing season. Issues: where to visit, transportation, guide, cost, scheduling. Suggestions welcome—where have you visited?

*We need to plan and prepare the garden plot—size, shape, and location (probably a sunny area, accessible to water, near the building on its right side looking from Rt 74.) Also to clear the space, provide tools, topsoil, compost, wheelbarrows, etc. Maybe fencing??

*We need to choose, procure, and plant seeds and plants. Many old varieties may be growing in our own yards and uncultivated areas. We could publish a list of desired plants and ask people to dig up and pot some for us this early spring for later planting.

*We need folks who will maintain the garden once it is planted—both short-term (watering, weeding, etc.,) and longer-term seasonal chores.

Hopefully we can get this started at minimal expense. The time-frame is open. We want to do it right without too much burden on available workforce and limited resources. Many thanks to the Willington Garden Club members who have offered to help out. I am willing to help co-ordinate this effort. Let me know what you want to do. Let's meet and share ideas in the near future. You can reach me either by email or phone(860-429-9804, please leave contact information and a message saying why you are calling if we don't answer).

Thanks, Pam Wheeler



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A Tavern on the Green – Part 1

By Mark Palmer

We sometimes look at local history as a collection of unique, seemingly unrelated events. Part of the challenge of interpreting local history is connecting the dots in order to draw a more detailed picture of the times. The Daniel Glazier Tavern, up and running in 1815, sits near the west end of the Congregational Meeting House Green (or Common). It was part of what had been known as the Moses Holmes farm and was adjacent to both the Tolland County Turnpike and the Mansfield and Windham Turnpike, today's State Routes 74 and 320.

From our perspective, Glazier's tavern had an ideal location: a place near the center of town that could have been a stage stop on either turnpike route. In fact, after the Tolland County was created, the tavern could have been a stopping point on the road connecting the Tolland County Court House to the Boston Turnpike. The importance of the connection is suggested when this road was designated as one of the state Trunk Line routes. In 1905 the state took over the maintenance of state aid roads and by 1914 this route was one of the main roads through eastern Connecticut, connecting Hartford and Tolland to Putnam and Providence.

Norwich Turnpike

Frederick Wood, in his 1919 book, *Turnpikes of New England*, noted that stage stops were generally one to seven miles apart. The siting of these stage houses or taverns was probably determined by terrain and points of connection. The taverns could have been places to change or water the team of horses or perhaps drop off or pick up passengers. As a way of advertising the services, some stage routes and itineraries were published in the various regional almanacs published every year. Wood noted that stage routes occasionally deviated from turnpike roads and that stage roads were in use prior to the creation of turnpikes. In addition to these Public Houses, the occasional toll house would have been stops as well. One might wonder if toll houses also serviced stages.

Frederick Wood described the north-south route of the Windham and Mansfield Turnpike, chartered in 1800, as running from Norwich to Stafford. Wood noted a number of taverns on the way through Windham and Mansfield along Route 32 then Jerusalem Road to Windham Center and north on Route 195 through Mansfield. The last tavern mentioned in Mansfield is Samuel Thompson's before crossing the Boston Turnpike (Route 44) at Bardsley's Corner, present day Storrs Four Corners. In Willington records, the turnpike road was sometimes called the

Norwich Turnpike or the Norwich and Stafford Road. The route today runs along Route 320, continuing to Stafford Common on Lohse Road and Stafford Street Extension.

Wood's only mention of Willington is that the Windham and Mansfield Turnpike passed through the center of town and continued to Stafford Meeting House. Wood does not mention a tavern in Willington. State Public Records note a toll house in Willington near Darius Caulkin's dwelling (he lived on his father's farm) which the company in 1813 requested be moved to north of the Green. This was granted in 1814, however, the location of it as yet, is undetermined. An 1826 petition to the General Assembly from Willington opposed the addition of another toll house. According to Wood, mention of the Windham and Mansfield turnpike in state records ceases after 1828.

Tolland County Turnpike

Frederick Wood offers few details about the east-west Tolland County Turnpike, present day Route 74 (and in part, some of Wolcott's 1726 road). This turnpike was chartered in 1809.

According to General Assembly records, the road initially was viewed as running from Hartford to the Tolland County Court House, through Willington to Ashford. In East Hartford the route today is along Tolland Street and continues through Manchester on Tolland Turnpike to Vernon where it becomes Hartford Turnpike. As with Wood's description of the Windham and Mansfield route, there is no mention of taverns in Willington. The Tolland County turnpike apparently wasn't profitable, the charter being revoked in 1834, according to Wood.

With the state focused on good roads to connect neighboring towns and distant cities, a question might be, what was happening locally before the new roads officially opened? Next, we'll look at Willington Hill circa 1790.

Mark Palmer
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March 2018

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