



HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ≈ WILLINGTON

September 2013

Volume XLI No. 2



**The Willington Historical Society
Presents:**

**CIVIL WAR WEAPONS AND
ARTIFACTS**

September 24th, 2013 7PM

At the

Town Office Building

40 Old Farms Rd.

Common Room-upper level

BY STEVE MOLLAR

Program follows Annual Meeting

ANNUAL MEETING

September 24, 2013

The Annual Meeting of the Willington Historical Society will be held on September 24, 2013 in the Common Room, Upper Level, of the Town Office Building, 40 Old Farms Rd. The main order of business will be the election of the Society's President and Treasurer. Our by-laws state that these positions are to voted on at the Annual Meeting to fill a two(2) year term.

The Nominating Committee is presenting a slate including Robert Shabot for President and Sue Schur for Treasurer. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the time of the meeting.

At the conclusion of the business meeting which will include an update on the renovation/restoration work at the Daniel Glazier Tavern, there will be a presentation on Civil War firearms by Willington resident Steve Mollar.

We hope that you will plan on joining us for these events. Refreshments will be served.

Check us out on **Facebook**— **Willington Historical Society** & our website:

willingtonhistoricalsocietyct.org OR email us:

willingtonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

From: The Presidents Desk:



Communications... "Like" Us

Staying current with communications is the life blood of any historical society. That's how we attract new members and volunteers.

Our primary focus is Willington history, which comes in a variety of categories that interest various individuals.

The challenge for the Society is to decide what information to present and how to distribute it for maximum attention. Usually, if people like what they see, they respond with comments. So, how can we attract attention to generate comments? The answer is by trying new and different things.

Presently we are working on several exciting new projects. The first is a photo history of Willington, in the *Images of America* book format. The Town Historian, Joe Froehlich, and his wife, Trish, have been working for the better part of a year gathering photos and historical data from the Historical Society's archives and from many generous families in town. The book will present approximately 150 years of town history in mainly historic images but will also include modern images. We anticipate the book will be available in the spring of 2014 from the Historical Society. Watch for the announcement of its arrival.

Our next project presents photos and information in a digital format. Marion Dooling, our Webmaster, has created a Facebook page and the response we are getting has been very encouraging. This is a good place to view old photos, swap information about expected and unexpected topics concerning Willington and to find out about upcoming events. So log on, check us out and "like" us on Facebook (under Willington Historical Society).

Do you have any comments? We'd like to hear from you.

Bob Shabot, President

Spelunking at the Glazier Tavern by Robert Shabot



I guess a good starting point would be to first ask a question: have you ever given any thought to what happened to the ashes produced in a fireplace in the early 19th century? With a fire constantly burning for cooking, baking or heating, a lot of ash was generated. There was at least one solution for handling and storing all that ash back in those days. Let's take a few minutes and try to find a missing piece of this puzzle.

Spelunking – the 'sport' of getting your body through tight spaces between stone surfaces to explore a space beyond. You might wonder how that could possibly pertain to an early 19th century tavern. It is best explained if we take a short walk down the stairs into the basement of the Glazier Tavern. The first thing that is apparent is the dominating central stone chimney base. It's a mix of very large boulders and smaller stones laid dry (without cement) in an almost square pile of 12' x 14' and nearly six feet high. The point of interest for us is an opening on the east side of the chimney base, about six inches off the floor.

The opening has intrigued me ever since I first noticed it

when I served as the caretaker of the building for the Williams', before it was given to the Society in 2008. It is a smallish opening positioned to be recognizable as the clean-out for the basement ash pit. The space beyond the opening was built to serve as a receptacle for the wood ash generated from the first floor fireplace(s) at the time the Tavern was built. I had not given it much thought, except to kneel down several times on the basement floor to look into the gloomy interior, using a flashlight to try to judge the size of the interior space.

The bottom and top lintel of the opening are of cut stone held apart on either side by substantial fieldstones creating an opening of about 14" x 16". The depth of the pit measures six feet with the side to side measurement a bit smaller at 5^{1/2} feet. Because the entrance stones are about two feet from front to back, a view of the top portion of the pit isn't possible from the outside. The only option to get a full view is to get inside through the clean-out opening, if I can fit.

So, at this point, are you wondering why I want to look at the top portion of the ash pit? If you have read the last issue of this Newsletter (June 2013), you will recall that the Society is having the fireplaces in the taproom and kitchen (keeping room) areas of the Tavern rebuilt. The feeling is, if the fireplaces used the ash pit in the early 19th century, why shouldn't we use it with the rebuilt fireplaces? However, after the demolition of the modern fireplaces was finished, there were no visible signs of the ash dump holes that should have been at the back of the fireplaces, at least in the kitchen.

With a plastic sheet on the cellar floor extending into the ash pit, it was time to get in there and have a look. With a drop light pushed in ahead of me, the dark gloom gave way. I ran my hand over the stone lintel over my head one more time. I was sure that if it had been there for nearly 200 years, it wasn't about to fail me now. With a little pushing and pulling and turning my shoulders kitty-cornered in the opening, I was in!

Wow! What a cavity, the stacked, rounded, layered, cantilevered stone walls arching up and inward, reach to a height of just shy of six feet. The walls fail to meet at the top of the cavern, the nearly two foot open space is covered from the top by two flat stones, with their adjoining seam near the center of the space they cover. If the builders could manage this, the stone walls we see every day must have been a piece of cake for them to construct.

But now, back to finding the holes for dumping the ashes. Really nothing obvious, from the inside. With a short handle, I poked between a number of stones near the top of the walls, all solid. A second try around and only one maybe on the north wall. A few more pokes are followed by a surprise cascade of ash and pieces of brick, a few more pokes and daylight appears. We'll have an ash dump in the reconstructed kitchen fireplace. That one hole was all to be found from the inside search.

The other items of interest in the ash pit turned out to be the six inches of compressed period ash that covered the floor. Not to mention a few brown beer bottles, along with some clear gin like bottles, some broken.

In the end, the only thing I took out with me was the experience.

TAVERN TIMES



The Glaziers

By Melanie Tenney Becker

Ever since I became involved with the Daniel Glazier Tavern project I've been curious about the Glaziers. Who were they? Why did Daniel decide to build a tavern for his son? Were they farmers? And what would a farmer know about running a tavern? Often I hear people mention that a tavern was "the meeting place" for townspeople to share news in the early 19th century. Considering our puritan roots, how could that "news" have been the truth? With encouragement from others in Willington's Historical Society I decided to do some research.

I used several notebooks compiled by Isabel Weigold (who regularly told me that Willington had some "very interesting characters in its history!") as well as Ronald Demers' book *Modernization in a New England Town- A History of Willington, Connecticut*. Of course, various websites proved to be useful too.

Willington became the 54th town incorporated in Connecticut. That is out of 169 total towns! The original settlement officially began in 1720 when the Connecticut General Assembly sold approximately 16,000 acres to a group of eight investors led by Roger Wolcott, for the sum of about 500 British pounds sterling. Converting that value in 1720 to today's worth in pounds and then dollars

(www.measuringworth.com) would mean that the land was purchased for approximately \$96,000, or \$6.00 per acre. The nine investors were mostly from Connecticut and the tract was named "Wellington" after the town in Somerset, England, the birthplace of Wolcott's grandfather.

The first and only meeting of the new proprietors did not occur until June of 1727 at which time about ten thousand acres were divided among them. Interestingly enough, there were settlers in Willington prior to 1727 and among them was William Glazier.

William Glazier was born in 1708 in Lancaster, Massachusetts. His English ancestors were from Bedfordshire, England. Not surprisingly, there is a town called Willington in Bedfordshire. It dates back to 1150 a.d. and is mentioned in the Domesday Book – an important survey of England completed in 1086. It is said that in Olde English the name means *homestead among the willows*.

William's grandfather, John Glazier (b.1641 d.

1688 in Lancaster, Massachusetts) was the first Glazier to immigrate. His family remained in Massachusetts until William Glazier married Martha Wilder also from Lancaster (1708-1757) and they settled in Willington where some sources show they had eleven children.

Silas Glazier (1749-1817) was William and Martha's fourth son and the father of our Glazier Tavern builder! He appears on the muster rolls of militia sent to Massachusetts in April 1775 for the skirmish with the British at Lexington and Concord. Earlier, members of the town militia had formed a relief committee to help supply Boston's poor with provisions during the British occupation. Military men also made up most of Willington's Committee of Correspondence, which was used to keep in contact with other towns and share news of the affairs of American Liberty. Silas was among 31 Willington militia men who marched to Lexington and Concord in April 1775.

An interesting story about Silas's wife, Suze Johnson (1749-1826) claims that while her husband was away in the beginning of the revolution, she injured her leg severely enough that amputation was required. Upon recovery she was fitted with a wooden prosthetic leg. Silas and Suze built and lived in what is today the Joseph Hipsky farmhouse on Moose Meadow Road and it has been said that one could see the marks from her peg leg in the floor boards of the house!

Silas and Suze were the parents of Daniel Glazier (1776-1852).



Silas Glazier's gravestone located in the Olde Willington East Cemetery reads

REVOLUTIONARY WAR
SILAS GLAZIER
LEXINGTON ALARM

For the next issue we'll explore his life and the Tavern!

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS



Wooden globe and base owned by Jared Sparks at the age of 10 (c. 1799).

Measurements: Base: 7 ½" across; 9 ½" high Globe: 17" circumference

Of special interest are the equator-parallels and meridian lines. Sparks was interested in astronomy and traced the paths of planets and comets on the globe.

Jared Sparks (1789-1866) was born in Willington, CT. He was an American historian, educator, and Unitarian minister. He was a graduate of Harvard College and served as President of Harvard from 1849-1853. Sparks studied theology and was a tutor in math and natural philosophy. He is best known for the 12 volumes on the "Life and Writings of George Washington" and the "Life of George Washington. He also published the "North American Review" while contributing many articles. He is buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

WHS Contact Information

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Acquisition: **Lisa Ferriere**

Membership: **Betty Robertson**

Ways and Means: **Melanie Tenney Becker**

Program: **Joe Froehlich**

APPEAL FOR MEMBERS AND DONORS

In our newsletters, we have been accustomed to publish an appeal to our members to renew their membership by sending in their dues which help pay for the cost of this newsletter, program presentations, acquisitions of historic significance as well as some of the operating expenses for the Tavern. We hope to also encourage our friends and neighbors to join us for the first time to help support our mission to promote, preserve and celebrate the history of the Town of Willington.

Our fiscal year begins on October 1st, so your support now will help carry us from now until September 30, 2014. However, we need more than just members' dues. Financial support in the form of donations is a necessary part of our existence, especially as we continue to renovate and re-purpose the Glazier Tavern for programs, displays, office and research space.

The Willington Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization, and all donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

For those people who have reached the age of 70 ½, and are required to take a distribution from their IRA, the Internal Revenue Service has extended the opportunity to give that distribution (all or part of it) directly to a qualified charitable organization (such as the Willington Historical Society) for the 2013 tax year. By doing so, the distribution is excluded from your taxable income. These donations must be made directly from the IRA to the Willington Historical Society. We suggest you contact your financial institution for details.

Any donations, including IRA distributions, will be added to our "Museum Fund", unless otherwise specified. This fund has been used for expenses relating to the restoration and renovation of our building at One Common Road. If you have any questions, you may email us at: willingtonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com, or call Susan Schur, Treasurer, 860-429-2148.

A membership/donation form is included in this newsletter.

ACQUISITIONS JULY 2013

Donation from the Slater Memorial Museum of Norwich Free Academy

Ten stone items, one crystal and two powder horns, found in Willington, CT – originally stored in a wood box labeled "James G. Service boyhood treasure chest." They were first donated to the Slater Museum by James Brigham Service (son of James G. Service).

The larger powder horn has some illegible words and 1822 inscribed in dots. The stone items are considered not to be Native American material, although one could be an axe head.

Thank-you all for your generous donations!

Willington Historical Society

2013-2014 Membership Application

Annual membership from October 1, 2013 until September 30, 2014

STUDENT	\$10.00	
INDIVIDUAL	\$20.00	
FAMILY	\$30.00	
CORPORATE	\$50.00	
LIFE (Individual or Family)	\$250.00	
DONATION (tax deductible)		
TOTAL		

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE WILLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NAME(S) _____

STREET _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

(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!)

WILL YOU HELP???? PLEASE CHECK SPECIAL INTERESTS.

SERVE AS AN OFFICER/ATTEND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS _____

HELP WRITE THE NEWSLETTER _____ **HELP PREPARE IT FOR MAILING** _____

HELP PLAN AND SETUP SPECIAL EXHIBITS _____

HELP INVENTORY AND CATALOG ACQUISITIONS _____

HELP WITH PROGRAMS AND PROGRAM PLANNING _____

HELP WITH FUND RAISING _____

PARTICIPATE IN WORKDAYS AT THE TAVERN _____

PLEASE INCLUDE IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAMS ON OTHER SIDE
Mail to: Betty Robertson, Membership Chair, Willington Historical Society,
P.O. Box 214, Willington, CT 06279