



HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ≈ WILLINGTON

Sept. 2015

Volume XLIII No. 3



CEMETERIES AND HEADSTONES

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CARVERS
AND SYMBOLS USED IN THE
17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

PRESENTED BY DICK ROBERTS
SPONSORED BY THE WILLINGTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 2015
7:00 P.M.

WILLINGTON TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
OLD FARMS ROAD
CONFERENCE ROOM-LOWER LEVEL

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

SHORT BUSINESS MEETING PRIOR TO THE PROGRAM



The Willington Historical Society's Annual Meeting

will take place on Tuesday, September 29th, 2015
at the Town Office Building, Old Farms Road at
7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room on the Lower
Level.

A short business meeting, including the election
of President and Treasurer for two year terms, will
be followed by a presentation about early
American gravestones, their symbols and their
carvers.

Dick Roberts of neighboring Mansfield, who has
retired from the CT State Library, Genealogy
Division, is an avid student of all things connected
with cemeteries and their headstones. He will
share his extensive knowledge and photos of New
England cemeteries and how headstones evolved
over the early 17th and 18th centuries.

Please join us for this free program!

From: The Presidents Desk

By Bob Shabot



History – sometimes we step in it ...

Yes, history can be a messy thing, depending on what you know and what you don't. Unless you've lived through a particular part of history or have the ability to speak to someone who has, there will always be unknowns: what really happened? How did people live and work? What did things cost and how were they paid for? How do these puzzle pieces fit together and where do you find the pieces?

Recently, we (the Society) had a request for early family information, with it the added inquiry, "I'm looking for ways to understand life in their days ... ". My responses included visiting Old Sturbridge Village or Williamsburg, observing the harder lifestyle (that would be an eye opener, for most of us) or perhaps reading an old daily diary. The idea of reading an old diary is easy to accomplish, as a 'good' many survive. But not so from Willington, at least speaking for the contents of the Willington Historical Society archives. The possibility of finding the pieces of "life in their days" would lie in those old forgotten pages.

As I remarked recently, in a correspondence, 1700's or early 1800's diaries are an invaluable resource and literally are about as scarce as hen's teeth to find these days. (For the younger readers wondering what the heck is a chicken with teeth, I'll ask you, have you ever seen any bird with teeth? If you have, it's rare, and if you haven't, it must be impossible.)

At this point, I'd like to stand up and 'crow', that the Society recently received that proverbial hen's tooth. The impossible does happen, after all! The old puzzle pieces come in the form of diary/ledgers spanning the years 1802-1861. They are attributed to two men from Willington, Elijah Eldridge who was appointed as Captain of the 8th Co., 5th Reg. of the CT State Militia in 1800, and Royal Eldredge, farmer, businessman and bootmaker.

History has two stories for us, with this gift. One is the revealing personal history of two Willington men, who we knew little about. The other is the history of where these diary/ledgers have been. We know that a previous Town Clerk, Leon Woodworth, originally obtained them. They then passed through two other family members' hands, always piled together with other paper goods in attics and closets. They somehow survived two house cleanouts and finally one home downsizing. An unexpected email message from New Jersey to the Historical Society this year, reconnected the material with Willington.

So, as hard as we try ...

... sometimes history just falls in our lap.

Tavern Times

Connecticut Arts Council Grant

Again this year, the Willington Historical Society has pursued grant monies to help with the continuing restoration work at the Glazier Tavern. This year's effort was led by local artist Kathleen Zimmerman. Kathleen approached the Historical Society with the idea of combining Public Art with the continuing restoration of the tavern, in the form of a CT Arts Council Grant. This project would combine Art, Restoration & Culture at the Historic Daniel Glazier Tavern. The idea was to combine both a sculptural portion, in the form of an exterior tavern sign and promotional print work, while continuing restoration of interior walls and windows at the tavern and finally hosting a culturally based community event at the Glazier Tavern. Of course, all this would depend on the grant being awarded for our proposed efforts here in Willington.

If successful, we would be working with the Willington Planning and Zoning Commission in order to get a sign permit as well as with the Historic District Commission to gain approval for a period-appropriate Tavern sign design. Our interest in a roadside sign is to alert passing individuals to the history of the building and the presence of the Willington Historical Society as the proprietor.



So, with the end of summer, so also ended our hope of securing the Arts Grant. With a struggle for monies in Hartford, to bring the State budget into line, the amount of monies targeted to be awarded was cut in half. No, we didn't get the grant, but we're hoping to reapply the next time the Arts Grant is available.

Last, but not least, the Society would like to thank Kathleen for her time and effort in putting the majority of the grant application together for us. We are ever grateful for her interest in working with the Historical Society in bringing more attention to the history of the Glazier Tavern.

ANNUAL APPEAL FOR MEMBERS AND DONORS

Our fiscal year ends on Sept. 30, 2015, so it is time to renew your present membership or become a first time member. PLEASE NOTE: if your address label has the numerals "9/2016" you have already PAID through NEXT September. Any additional payment will be considered a donation to our Museum Fund.

AND, we do need more than just members' dues. Monetary donations are 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. Donations may be made in the form of checks, or through our website, www.willingtonhistoricalsocietyct.org. Just click on "Donations" which will display a "Donate" button. 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.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT!

WHS Contact Information

President: Bob Shabot - we3inct@sbcglobal.net
Vice President: Paul Weigold - pweigold52@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Sue Schur - sue.b.schur@snet.net
Secretary: Catherine Lynch—catherin.lynch@charter.net

Committee Chairs:

Acquisitions: Lisa Ferriere
Membership: Betty Robertson
Program: Joe Froehlich
Publicity: This could be you!
Ways & Means: This could be you!
Website manager: Marion Dooling
Town Historian: Joe Froehlich -Willingtonhistorian@charter.net

Email: willingtonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Website: www.willingtonhistoricalsocietyct.org

LIKE US on FACEBOOK

Willington Historical Society
P.O. 214
Willington, CT 06279

The William Masinda Button Shop by Paul Weigold

Question: Fix it or let it go?

I have been interested in old machines and how they work for as long as I can remember. Having that interest lead me to become a member of the New England Chapter of the Society of Industrial Archeology. That being said, I had a conversation with Maureen Masinda Gantick, whose family still owns the first button shop started in Willington by her grandfather, William Masinda, in 1903. She encouraged me to contact her brother, Mark, (who I had gone to school with in the 60's) for a tour.



So on a cool day in Oct, I met Mark, and he took me down to the little shop. It is a building set on the old millpond dam with lots of windows to let in the natural light. The old brick chimney had years ago fallen down to the original fieldstone base opening the wall to the weather. The trees and brambles had grown up around the building and left their leaves and roots to undermine the lowest corner of the building leaving the sill and floor to rot and decay. The effects of that caused one corner to sink more than a foot. The old roof was covered by a metal corrugated sheet that was starting to become full of holes, old storm windows had been tacked over the old 6 over 6's and all the glass had fallen out. When pushing the old door open as much as one could, it was obvious that after the end of the button shop's working existence, it had become the last resting place of those items no longer needed by the generations that followed. The pine boards that once formed the floor are no longer able to support one's weight, making the way inside a cautious one. To my amazement all the machines and the buttons were still there. It was just as if everyone was going to start work the next day. The line shafts up in the rafters sat with remains of belts that once connected the machines to water turbines some 20 feet below through the boarded up opening that was closed some 80 years ago. I climbed as high as I could to touch and feel the overhead beams and rafters. Was there enough there to save this little old piece of Willington history or are we just too late?

To be continued...

Willington Historical Society

2015-2016 Membership Application

Annual membership from October 1, 2015 until September 30, 2016

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

NAME(S) : _____

STREET: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP : _____

PHONE : _____

EMAIL : _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE WILLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(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