



# Loom and Spindle

THE MILL MUSEUM OF CONNECTICUT /  
WINDHAM TEXTILE AND HISTORY MUSEUM

## COMING EVENTS :

Exhibit: Inspiration Quilts: Then and Now. May 16–Sep. 7.

Program: Kids Club: Passenger Pigeons. Sat., Sep. 13, from 1-2:30 PM. For kids 5-12.

Program: Museum Lyceum: "David Moxon's Forgotten Files," Sun., Sep. 21, 4 PM. Dr. Jamie Eves will give an illustrated talk on the 1925 American Thread strike in Willimantic. Suggested donation: \$5 (members free).

Field Trip: Mill of the Month: North Grosvenordale. Join historian Bev York for a guided tour of the North Grosvenordale mill neighborhood in Thompson, CT. Sat., Sep. 27, at 10 AM. \$8 (\$6 seniors, students, and Museum members). Meet in North Grosvenordale.

Exhibit: Blue Collar, White Collar: Wardrobes for Work. Oct. 4, 2014–Dec. 31, 2015.

Program: Kids Club: Rivers, Canals, and Hydro Power. Sat., Oct. 11, from 1-2:30 PM. For kids 5-12.

Field Trip: Mill of the Month: Wauregan, Plainfield. Join historian Bev York for a guided tour of the Wauregan mill neighborhood in Plainfield, CT. Sat., Oct. 25, at 10 AM. \$8 (\$6 seniors, students, and Museum members). Meet in Wauregan.

Field Trip: Mill of the Month. Yantic. Join historian Bev York for a guided tour of the Yantic mill neighborhood. Sat., Nov. 22, at 10 AM. \$8 (\$6 seniors, students, and Museum members). Meet in Yantic.

Program: Kids Club. Factory Work — Henry Ford Came to Willimantic. Sat., Nov. 8, from 1-2:30 PM. For kids 5-12.

Program: Museum Lyceum: Willimantic Strikes of 1912. Dr. Anna Jaroszynska-Kirchmann. Sun., Nov. 16, at 4 PM. Suggested donation: \$5 (members free).

Program: Just Desserts. Sun., Nov. 23, 3-5 PM. Join us for a Victorian afternoon tea, featuring various teas and delicious homemade desserts from many of the countries from which people migrated to work in the textile mills of eastern Connecticut. \$8 per person if paid in advance, \$12 at the door. For reservations call 860-456-2178.

Program: Kids Club: Gingerbread Holiday. Sat., Dec. 13, from 1-2:30 PM. Additional \$5 materials fee. For kids 5-12.

## STRIKE!

The history of the textile industry — in Connecticut and elsewhere — is in part a story of strikes. Famous textile strikes in America include the Lawrence (MA) Bread and Roses strike of 1912, Paterson (NJ) strike of 1913, Willimantic (CT) American Thread strike of 1925, Passaic (NJ) strike of 1926, New Bedford (MA) strike of 1928, and the nationwide textile strike of 1934.

On Labor Day, September 1 at 6 p.m., local historian Bev York and the Mill Museum will reenact Willimantic's mini-Bread and Roses strikes of 1912, an unusual victory for the workers. The public is invited to dress in vintage clothing (optional), come to the museum to paint picket signs (we will be gathering in the museum's newly renovated meeting room on the second floor of the Dugan Mill building, a former union hall), learn some strike songs and chants, and join us as we walk in the steps that workers walked in 1912. The 1912 strikers were assisted by some national union organizers from the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, or "Wobblies"). A few famous Wobblies will appear and share excerpts from their actual speeches. The public is invited to come and learn more about the labor issues surrounding the strike. There is no cost to participate.

The 1912 strikes in Willimantic began about a month after the famous and successful Bread and Roses



**1925 American Thread Strike.**

involved in violence. Flynn has been described as "an East Side Joan of Arc." For more information, call [860-456-2178](tel:860-456-2178). The program is funded in part by a grant from Connecticut Humanities.



**Connecticut state police escorting strikebreakers to work during the 1925 American Thread Strike in Willimantic, CT.**

strike in Lawrence, MA. More than 1000 workers from the Windham-Quidnick Company, American Thread Company, and other Willimantic mills went on strike to protest the companies' failure to give them a promised wage increase. The workers were mostly unskilled Polish, Italian, French Canadian, and Syrian women. Management thought the strikes could be easily crushed because most of the women were not fluent in English. However, the strikers managed to send for union representatives from the IWW. One of the Wobblies, 22-year-old Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, arranged for interpreters and urged the strikers to parade down Main Street and not to become

## A LOOK AT LABOR

The Mill Museum's 1912 strike reenactment on Labor Day (see page 1) is only the first in a series of exciting programs over the coming year that will explore the history of work and labor in Connecticut's textile industry. These programs, collectively titled "A Look at Labor," are made possible by a grant from Connecticut Humanities.

Two historians will present lectures at the Museum that take closer looks at important Connecticut textile strikes. First, on Sunday, September 21, at 4 p.m., Dr. Jamie Eves will give an illustrated talk on the 1925 American Thread strike in Willimantic, "David Moxon's Forgotten Files: The Impact of a Strike on the History of a Community, a State, and an Industry." Eves will examine the strike itself, its affect on Willimantic, and its connection to the decline of the textile industry in New England, already well underway in 1925. Then, on Sunday, November 16, at 4 p.m., Dr. Anna Jaroszynska-Kirchmann will speak on the 1912 strikes. Both talks, which are part of our Museum Lyceum lecture series, have a suggested donation of \$5 (Museum members free).

In addition to the strike reenactment and the talks, in early October the Mill Museum will open a new temporary exhibit, "Blue Collar, White Collar: Wardrobes for Work." Museum staff and volunteers are currently hard at work designing the exhibit, which will feature work clothes from the museum's collection. The items will include both men and women's garments, and represent numerous different types of labor, from mill work, to nursing, office work, and even baseball.

All of these programs are affiliated with "Connecticut at Work," an initiative created by Connecticut Hu-

manities that explores the past, present, and future of work life in Connecticut. "Connecticut at Work" features the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibition "The Way We Worked," which will visit our neighbor museum, the Nathan Hale Homestead in Coventry, CT, through September 14. The traveling exhibit will also stop in six other Connecticut communities: New Haven, Torrington, Hartford, Waterbury, Stamford and Groton. For a calendar of events and more information about Connecticut at Work, visit [cthumanities.org/ctatwork](http://cthumanities.org/ctatwork).



**Top:** Nineteenth-century women's hat. Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, the famous labor organizer of the late 1800s and early 1900s, wore a hat like this. Harriet Hanson Robinson, a mill worker in Lowell, MA, in the 1800s, reported that women who left rural New England communities to take jobs in the textile factories quickly traded in their old-fashioned bonnets for stylish "city hats" like this. **Middle:** Truck driver's hat from the American Thread Company in Willimantic, CT. **Left:** A nurse's hat and cape. **Below:** Mill worker attire from the 1940s at the American Thread Company.

### SEPTEMBER STROLL

The Mill Museum will be participating in Willimantic's "September Stroll." On Saturday, Sep. 20, businesses in downtown Willimantic are inviting visitors and shoppers to stroll the Thread City's Victorian Main Street. Restaurants are concocting special dishes for the occasion, and shops and stores are putting out special wares. The Mill Museum's gift shop will feature signed prints of three A. N. Wyeth watercolors: his new "Floodgate at Old No. 3 on the Willimantic River," "Mill Girl at No. 4," and his classic "American Thread Mills," for \$50, \$45, and \$50, respectively. That day only, purchasers will also receive a free copy of *Mills and Meadows* by Bruce Stave and Michele Palmer (a \$20 value) or *Willimantic Industry and Community* by Tom Beardsley (a \$15 value). Come stroll Main Street — and visit the Mill Museum.



# TOYS IN THE MUSEUM



Visitors to the Museum will see a number of antique toys scattered in different locations on the second floor, as part of our Thread Mill Square exhibit. Some of the toys date to the c. 1900 setting of the exhibit, while others date to the 1920s, 30s, 40s, and 50s. Some of the toys are from the Museum's collection, while others are on loan from one of our members. The idea behind the toys is to remind visitors that children were present in the homes (and mills) of textile communities. Visitors will see a beautiful, ornate, handmade dollhouse; porcelain dolls; a rag doll; Lincoln Logs; Tinker Toys; a knock-off brand Erector Set; blocks; model trains; and many other toys. We learned that, before World War I (1912-18), German factories dominated the global toy industry, but because of the war, American businesses surged into the lead in the 1910s. For this reason (and because of the simultaneous expansion of electricity into middle class homes), the first three decades of the 20th century became the seedbed time in which many of the iconic toys we grew up with were created. Someone who saw children playing with spools and sticks invented Tinker Toys. The son of Frank Lloyd Wright invented Lincoln Logs. Raggedy Anne also appeared at this time, as did Erector Sets. Did you know that teachers can use Tinker Toys to illustrate the Pythagorean Theorem? Come visit the



Museum and see the toys – for the young at heart of all ages.

**Top: Early 20th-century doll house.**

**Above: Knock-off version of an Erector Set, also early 20th century.**

**Left: Late 19th-century ceramic (bisque) doll.**

**Can you find these and other toys when you visit the Mill Museum?**

## ***VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT THE MILL MUSEUM***

- **Data entry:** Enter data into a variety of Museum databases, including Excel and Past perfect (we will train you). Commitment varies from a one-time experience of a few hours, to long-term commitments, depending on the needs and wishes of the volunteer.
- **Archive aide:** We have many artifacts to be preserved and cataloged. This is an opportunity to be hands on with historic materials. Commitment varies from a one-time experience of a few hours, to long-term commitments, depending on the needs and wishes of the volunteer. The Museum will provide the training.

## MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FALL 2014

If you have already renewed your membership, thank you!

Kids Club, \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Wool (Family/Household), \$50 \_\_\_\_\_

Cotton (Individual), \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Silk (Patron), \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional, \$1,000+ \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Donation \_\_\_\_\_

We are a 501(c)3 organization. Your donations are tax deductible.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to: W. T. H. M. (Or use PayPal on the Museum's web site, <http://www.millmuseum.org/> )

Windham Textile and History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226

WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
WWW.MILLMUSEUM.ORG

**THE MILL  
MUSEUM OF  
CONNECTICUT**  
WINDHAM TEXTILE AND  
HISTORY MUSEUM

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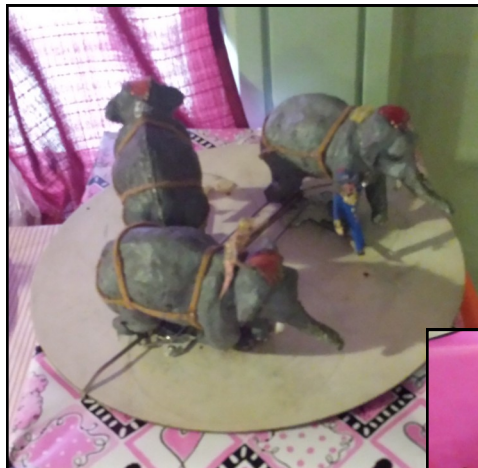
Phone: (860) 456-2178  
Email: themillmuseum@gmail.com

### PLANNING GRANT

In addition to the "A Look at Labor" grant (see pages 1 and 2), the Mill Museum has received a second grant from Connecticut Humanities, this one to begin planning a new permanent exhibit. The idea is to create an introductory exhibit — something visitors see first, before they look at the Thread Mill Square c. 1900 exhibit, the Dugan Mill factory floor exhibit, or any of the other, more specific exhibits at the Museum — which establishes a context for what they see in the rest of the Museum. The new exhibit (which is still several years from completion) will present an overview of the rise and fall of the Connecticut textile industry, and of the creation, flowering, and decline of mill towns.

Here's what is really cool about this project: everyone gets to participate. Yes, the Museum's staff will help plan the new exhibit. And yes, the grant pays for the services of expert advisors, academic and non-academic alike. But in Connecticut, the rise and fall of mill towns is everyone's story. We will soon have a survey on our web site (with links from our Facebook page), asking you what you think we

should include in the exhibit — how you think we should tell your story. We will also soon be holding a public meeting at the Museum, which folks interested in the topic can attend and voice their opinions. Look for notices about both.



### JACK ALLEN'S CIRCUS

A miniature circus, lovingly crafted by local artist Jack Allen, has returned. Several years ago, Allen created a marvelous miniature, puppet-like circus. It was shown in several places, then put into storage — where, unfortunately, it was damaged when a sprinkler pipe burst. Now, thanks to the volunteer efforts of another artist, Gordon Macdonald, many of the figurines have been restored, and are on display at the Museum, along with a video made when Allen was first demonstrating the circus several years ago. Allen's circus is a phenomenal piece of local folk art, and really worth seeing.

