



Loom and Spindle

THE MILL MUSEUM OF CONNECTICUT /
WINDHAM TEXTILE AND HISTORY MUSEUM

COMING EVENTS:

- **Exhibit: "Latino Migration to Willimantic, CT."** Through Dec. 8. Included with admission to the Museum (\$7 general admission, \$5 students and seniors, members and children under 6 free).
- **Kids Club: "Candle Dipping."** Sat., Sep. 14, 1-2:30 PM, \$5 per child. Kids Club members free. Learn about lighting, from tallow candles to whale oil to Edison's electric light bulb. Each participant will dip a pair of candles. For children 5-12. At the Museum with Bev York.
- **Fundraiser Event: "Willimantic Long Timers' Backyard Block Party."** Sun., Sep. 15, 3-6 PM. 120 Bolivia Street (backyard of State Rep. Susan Johnson. Donation requested.
- **Museum Lyceum: "Global Latinos: Connecticut's Latin American Diaspora."** Sat., Sep. 24, 4 PM. Talk by Dr. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, Director of El Instituto: Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean & Latin American Studies at the University of Connecticut. At the Museum. Donation requested.
- **Mill of the Month: "Walking Tour of Taftville, Norwich, CT."** Sat., Sep. 28, 10 AM. Meet at Taftville (contact the Museum for directions). With Norwich town historian Dale Plummer. \$8 per person. Don't forget your "passport."
- **Museum Lyceum: "Panel Discussion on Latino Policy."** Oct., date and time to be announced. Panel of 2-3 current members of Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission to meet with Willimantic area residents to discuss problems currently faced by Willimantic's Latino population. At the Museum.
- **Kids Club: "Marvelous Masks."** Sat., Oct. 12, 1-2:30 PM, \$5 per child. Participants tour the dark corners of the Museum to learn some ghost stories and create Hallowe'en masks. At the Museum with Bev York.
- **Mill of the Month: "Walking Tour of Smith and Winchester, South Windham, CT."** Sat., Oct. 26, 10 AM. Meet in South Windham (contact the Museum for directions). With Bev York. \$8 per person. Don't forget your "passport."

THE WILLIMANTIC LONG TIMERS' BACKYARD BLOCK PARTY: THE CELEBRATION OF THE (HALF) CENTURY!

The Windham Textile and History Museum proudly celebrates the Museum's 25th birthday, 50 years of business on Main Street in Willimantic, CT (the Museum's home town), and the distinguished career of long-time Connecticut legislator, advocate for the elderly, and eastern Connecticut icon Edith Prague. The Willimantic Long Timers Backyard Block Party, a one-day event, will showcase businesses on Willimantic's Main Street in 1963. Willimantic residents and the Museum will display memorabilia, photos, and stories Willimantic businesses a half century ago on a skyline mural of Main Street from Cardinal Square to the Shell Chateau.

The guest of honor at the block party will be Edith Prague, Connecticut State Commissioner on Aging, whose family owned Prague Shoe stores in Willimantic for many years.

This major one-day event will be held on Sunday, September 15, 2013 from 3pm to 6pm at 120 Bolivia Street, Willimantic, CT, in the backyard of Windham State Representative Susan Johnson. The Long Timers Backyard Block Party will be for Willimantic Long Timers, museum supporters and for anyone who would like to learn about Willimantic during the most recent Golden Age.

The event will be a fundraiser for the Museum, so bring your checkbook. All proceeds will go towards painting the Museum's main build-

ing at 411 Main Street in Willimantic. Admission will be by donation, and donation jars will be displayed prominently.

The Block Party also celebrates the 25th birthday of the Museum, which opened to the public in September, 1988.



Two photos of Main Street in Willimantic from the Museum's collection, along with a photo of the Museum's main building from 25 years ago, while it was being renovated in preparation for opening.

MUSEUM RECEIVES GRANT FOR LATINO WELCOMING PROJECT

The Windham Textile and History Museum has received a \$1,335 grant from Connecticut Humanities to make the Museum more accessible to Hispanic visitors. The grant will pay for reprinting the Museum's self-guided tour booklet in both Spanish and English, printing a bilingual version of the Museum's promotional brochure, and translating some of its exhibit captions into Spanish.

"We are very excited about this project," said the Museum's Executive Director, Dr. Jamie H. Eves. "Latinos comprise roughly half the population of Willimantic, and the Museum is located in a majority Latino neighborhood."

"Everyone should have access to their own history," Eves added. Like other groups before them, Latinos came to Willimantic

and other mill towns in Connecticut to work in the factories. When the Museum tells the stories of the textile workers, it needs to include Latinos."

The translations will be done by Dagmarie Rosario, a student intern at Eastern Connecticut State University majoring in Spanish. Ms. Rosario will be supervised by Dr. Kin Chan, an ECSU Professor of Spanish.

"Dagmarie is already hard at work," Eves enthused. "I can't wait to see her final translations."

The translation project comes just as the Museum has mounted a new, major exhibit on Latino migration to Willimantic. The exhibit is curated by Dr. Ricardo Perez of ECSU, and received major financial support from the ECSU Foundation. The exhibit will be open until Dec. 8, 2013.



The Museum's Latino Welcoming Project is timed to coincide with its Latino Migration Exhibit. The Exhibit, which is bilingual, will be open through Dec. 8, 2013. It traces the experiences of Latinos in Willimantic, CT, and surrounding communities.

WORKING SPOOL TUMBLER NOW ON DISPLAY AT MUSEUM

Visitors to the Windham Textile and History Museum can now view a working early twentieth-century spool tumbler. The machine was restored by students at the Windham Vocational Technical High School, along with Museum volunteers.

"We are really excited to be able to demonstrate this machine," said Dr. Jamie H. Eves, the Museum's Executive Director. "Visitors will be able to get a real feel for what it was like to work in an old-time textile mill. It is so important that the technology not be forgotten – that we remember how we used to do things."

The machine was a gift from one of the Museum's members, Windham resident Al Beaulieu, a retired firefighter. "Al saw the machine on E-Bay. He put in a bid, acquired the machine, and then drove to Maine with his friend, Francois Gamache, to bring it back in his pick-up truck," said Eves.

The tumbler belonged to the American Thread Company, once Willimantic's signature industry and one of the largest thread mills in the world. Although ATCO's principal plant was in Willimantic, the Company owned sawmills in Maine, where it made its wooden spools.

"Today spools are mostly made of plastic or styrofoam," said Eves, "but for many years they were made of wood, chiefly white birch. When white birch became scarce in Connecticut in the late 1800s, the mill purchased an entire uninhabited township in northern Maine, which it named Willimantic. It cut white birch trees and floated the logs downriver to Milo, Maine, where it owned a sawmill."

The ATCO sawmill was located at Milo, because the small Maine town was located at the end of the railroad, which ATCO used to bring the finished spools south to Connecticut.

The tumbler was used to sand the spools, to make them smoother.

"It's a great machine," said Eves. "It's big. It makes lots of noise. It's

a simple technology. It gives visitors a good feel for what it felt like and sounded like inside a mill."

The tumbler was restored to working condition by students in teacher James Cardin's machine shop class.

"It was a real pleasure working with Jim Cardin on this project," said Eves. "His students did a great job!"

George Jones, a retired professor of mechanical engineering, volunteered to help the students design the tumbler's cradle and motor connections.

George Wilson and Cliff Michaud, Museum volunteers, finished the job by installing safety rails and a modern electric switch. Expenses were paid for by grants from the 1772 Foundation and the Greater Willimantic Rotary. Windham Industries, Inc. donated some of the materials.



Mr. James Cardin's class at Windham Technical High School, which restored the tumbler.

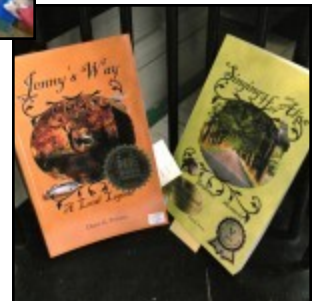
NEWS AND NOTES

*** Drop in for a visit to the Gift Shop. We now carry prize-winning local author Diana Perkins' new book, *Jenny's Way*, and Michele Palmer's new *American Toile* book. We also have unique jewelry crafted by local artisans as well as a varied selection of handmade items such as potholders, bibs, and quilts. Plus we have fragrant goat soap made by Oak Leaf Dairy in Lebanon CT. And a selection of hand-made creations by Mary Baum. So come on by. It's like exploring Grandma's attic. You never know what you might find.

*** On Saturday, Sept. 21, Dr. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, the Director of El Instituto: Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean & Latin American Studies at the University of Connecticut (and an Associate professor of History at UConn as well) will be at the Museum to speak on "Global Latinos: Connecticut's Latin American Diaspora." Dr. Overmyer-Velázquez's talk will begin at 4:00 PM. He will speak for about 45 minutes and then answer questions and otherwise engage the audience. There is no admission fee, but the Museum will put out a donation jar. Dr. Overmyer-Velázquez will emphasize the diverse backgrounds of Connecticut's Latinos.

*** The Museum welcomes Rita Allen as volunteer Collections Manager. Rita hails from the Pacific Northwest, and has an MA in Museology from the University of Washington. She is already hard at work cataloging several of the Museum's collections, with a special interest in textiles and fabrics.

*** We have made some changes and additions to our web site, thanks to our volunteer web mistress, Cheryl LeBeau. Check them out at www.millmuseum.org.



Just some of the many great items on sale in the Museum's gift shop, the Linen Company Store. Come by for a look!

MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL, SUMMER 2013

If you have already renewed your membership, thank you!

Cotton (Individual), \$25 _____

Wool (Family/Household), \$50 _____

Silk (Patron), \$100 _____

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

NAME: _____ E-Mail: _____

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

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WWW.MILLMUSEUM.ORG

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

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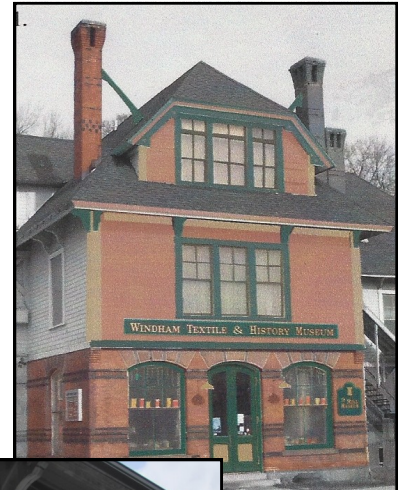
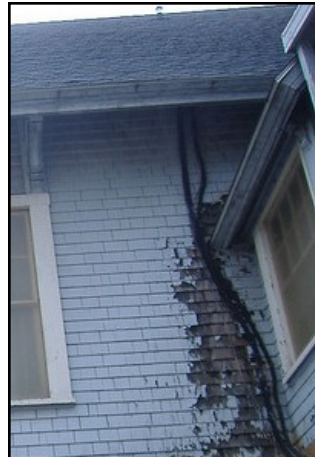
**MUSEUM KICKS OFF
CAMPAIGN TO
RAISE MONEY TO PAINT
MAIN BUILDING**

The Windham Textile & History Museum, also known as the Mill Museum, will be celebrating 25 years next year! During that time there have been so many improvements in educational programs, exhibits, community collaborations, and preservation at the museum. Please come and visit and see our progress.

Currently, our main building, Dunham Hall, is desperately in need of painting. The museum board has begun a capital campaign to raise funds necessary to transform the exterior of this architecturally distinct building into a showpiece.

It is my hope that the community will be generous and help us raise the money. We also need some volunteer labor to wash mildew. There have been so many wonderful members, volunteers, board members, donors, and visitors involved through the years. I appreciate all the community has done to help the museum. We want to celebrate our 25th in style!

Beu York



Two photos of peeling paint on the Windham Textile and History Museum. The third photo shows the proposed color scheme for repainting, to fit better with Willimantic's Victorian heritage.