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# *Loom and Spindle*

## *The Mill Museum Newsletter*

April 2025

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## **2025 Membership Drive**

There's never been a better time to become a member of the Mill Museum. With our newly renovated Bev York Room open to the public, we're thrilled to offer a growing lineup of family-friendly programs, hands-on activities, and community events. From craft tables for kids to weaving demonstrations and spinning bees, there's something here for all ages to enjoy. Right now, we're in the process of installing a brand-new permanent exhibit that brings the story of Connecticut's textile industry to life—offering visitors of all ages an engaging and interactive experience.

We're also planning new exhibits that highlight local history and feature the work of regional artists, alongside opportunities to learn traditional textile arts through

classes and lessons. Whether you're a parent looking for meaningful activities, a student eager to get involved, or someone who cares deeply about preserving our region's stories, we welcome you to join our growing community.

Membership includes perks like free admission, guest passes, and discounts—but most importantly, it supports our mission to preserve and share the textile, immigration, and industrial history of Willimantic. Your contribution makes it all possible.

We hope to see you at the Mill Museum soon!

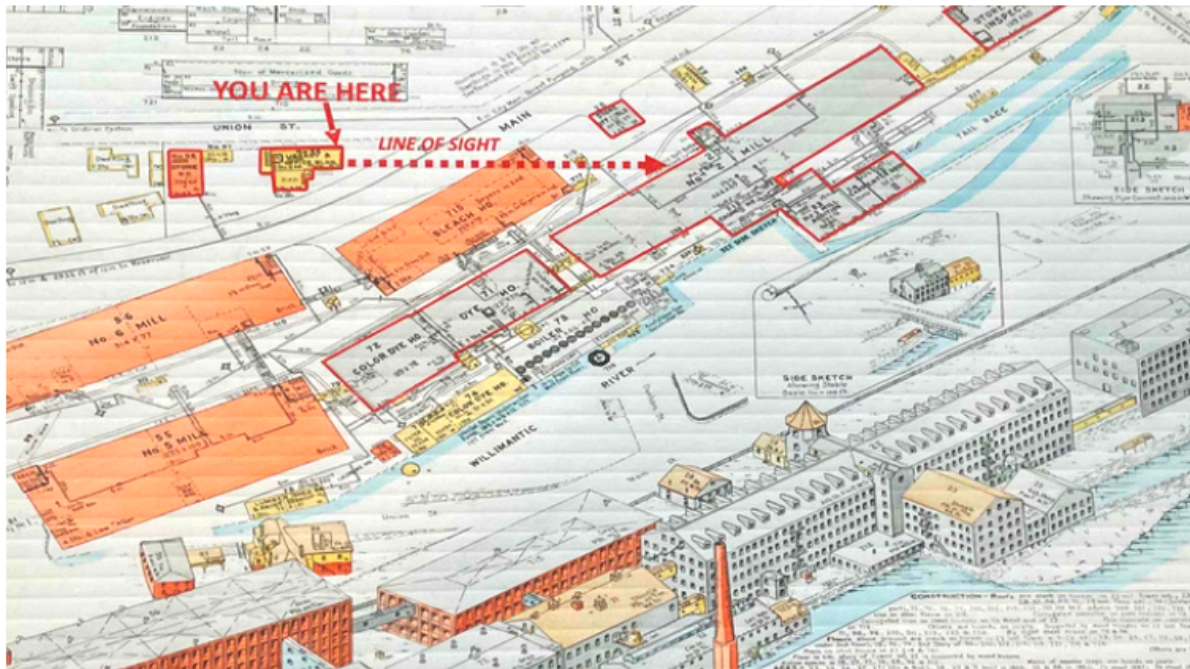
Warmly,

The Mill Museum Team

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## Upcoming Permanent Exhibit

### Thread City: The Rise and Fall of the Connecticut Textile Industry



We're thrilled to announce the creation of a new permanent exhibit in the south side of the Bev York Room. Thanks to a combination of grants, gifts, and community support, this long-planned project is finally underway. The exhibit draws from our own collection and tells the story of how Connecticut became a "maker state," how

- Preindustrial textile production (featuring our restored 1717 barn loom)
- Industrialization and factory life
- Mill town communities
- Management and labor
- The postindustrial transition

Each section will follow a discovery-based format with hands-on, interactive elements designed to engage visitors of all ages. The exhibit will also provide essential context for the rest of the museum.

We're excited to offer a more immersive, state-of-the-art experience for our community and visitors. Stay tuned for opening details!

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## Did the American Revolution empower women?

Historians debate that question; even free women didn't have the same rights as men. [Click here](#) to learn more about the nonimportation movement in New England (including Windham, Connecticut) and the role women textile workers played in the resistance against British tyranny.

The Mill Museum's Liberty's Daughters exhibit, 6/29-10/20/24, curated by Peggy Church and Jamie Eves, was complemented by live demonstrations by artists, historians, and crafters, including an August 2024 patriotic spinning bee at the Windham Town Green. The virtual exhibit is now on the Mill Museum website: . [Click here](#)

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## Current Exhibits and Events

**Stitched Through Stages: Treasures from our Collection**  
**Feb 8th - June 29th 2025**

Stitched Through Stages explores the intersection of childhood play and

domestic life, showcasing mid-century toys alongside homemaker tools. This collection invites visitors to consider how material culture has shaped perceptions of labor, gender roles, family traditions, and the societal expectations placed on women.

## “Sad Irons”

**Feb 8th - June 29th 2025**



Before modern, non-stick, electric steam irons homemakers pressed clothing and other textiles with sad irons, also called sadirons or flat irons. “Sad” is a 17th-century English term meaning “solid.” Visitors may touch many of the sad irons on display. This exhibit is a companion to “Stitched Through Stages”.

**Special Program: Monthly Spinning Bee**  
**Last Sat. of Every Month**  
**10am - 1pm**

Experienced spinner and weaver Peggy Church leads a drop-in spinning bee at the Mill Museum each month in the Museum’s historic Dugan Hall, 157-B Union St., Willimantic. Bring a spindle or wheel or just hang out. No admission charged for spinners. Beginners are welcome.



**Stitching Circle, Sunday,**  
**May 4, 2025. 2:00-4:00pm**

Bring your own project. Don't have a project to work on? We have a variety of materials, tools, and kits available in our gift shop.

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## Museum Renovation



We've given our exhibition space a much-needed makeover with freshly painted walls and brand-new carpet! The updated design creates a more vibrant, welcoming atmosphere for our visitors and a better environment for showcasing our exhibits. Your support as a member helps us continue to enhance spaces like this and bring even more exciting events to life.

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## Loom Restoration

Our newly restored 18th-century Swedish barn loom, dated 1717, is finally back on display! After years in storage, volunteers reassembled the loom, crafting missing parts and hand-tying traditional string heddles. Thanks to their hard work, this historic loom is now fully operational.

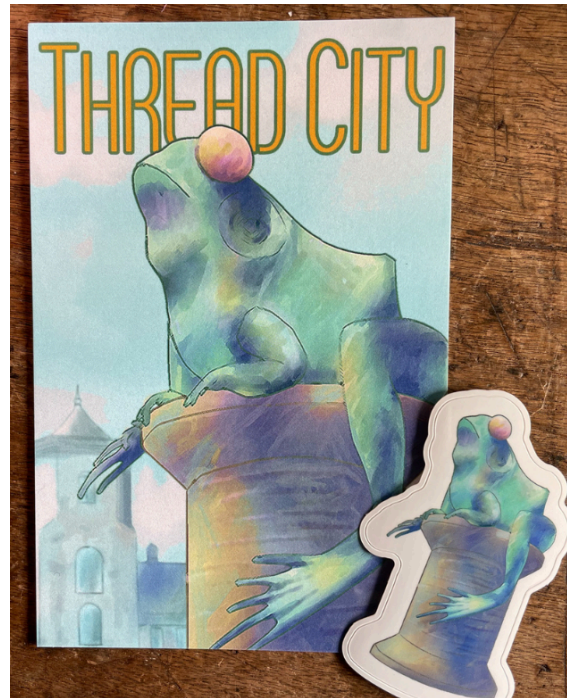


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## New in the Gift Shop



**Mill Museum Mug.**  
by Ceramist, Megan Starbird



**Frog Bridge Postcards and Stickers**  
Art.  
by Isabel Butterick

We Need You! The Mill Museum thrives thanks to our passionate volunteers. Whether you're interested in being a docent, assisting in the gift shop, or creating a role that fits your unique skills, we have a place for you. Our community is made up of artists, historians, teachers, makers, and lifelong learners—there's a niche here for everyone!

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please visit our website:

<https://millmuseum.org/support-us/support/> or stop by the museum! Or Email us at [info@millmuseum.org](mailto:info@millmuseum.org)

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### Get Woven into the Fabric of Our Museum

You don't have to live in Willimantic or Windham to support the Mill Museum. We're a REGIONAL museum, so folks throughout eastern Connecticut and beyond can learn about the vital role the mills and the people who worked in them played in shaping the area's history. If you've already become a member, THANK YOU! If not, please consider joining our ranks.

#### Annual Membership Levels:

Tier	Price	Benefits
Student	\$15	Membership newsletter access, Member pricing for events
Individual	\$30	2 guest passes, 10% discount at the gift shop, Membership newsletter access, Early event registration, Member pricing for events, 10% off rental space 1x per year
Family	\$60	Covers household of up to 4 people, 2 guest passes, 10% discount at the gift shop, Membership newsletter access, Early event registration, Member pricing for events, 10% off rental space 1x per year

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Premium	\$100	4 guest passes, 20% discount at the gift shop, Membership newsletter access, Early event registration, Member pricing for events, 10% off rental space 2x per year		
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Windham Textile & History Museum  
 411 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226  
 Make checks out to: WTHM

Go to <https://millmuseum.org/join-membership/> and join today or increase your level of membership. Your involvement may be one more thread in a growing tapestry of history.



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