



Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 555, Willimantic, CT 06226

WWW.VictorianWillimantic.org

Neighborhood News

Willimantic Over The Years Video Showing October 23

By Bob Horrocks

Willimantic Over the Years is a 2004 video produced by Babacar Diop, an Eastern Connecticut State University student who combined vintage photos, vivid video footage, and narration by many of Willimantic's personalities into a comprehensive view of Willimantic from the 1600s to the present. The video begins with a description of Willimantic's original Native American settlers, and John Cates, its first settler. It also shows how money was donated to develop a church town that eventually led to the dividing up of acreage for farmland. The now famous "Frog Legend" is succinctly described by Janet Clapp as evidence of how rumors and traditions begin and are perpetuated. The role of the Willimantic River as a source of energy driving as many as twenty mills more than 100 years ago is captured in film footage and gives one a sense of how important water was to the town's development.

This natural resource led to the construction of the largest cotton mill in the world in the 1820s. The Willimantic Linen Company later became the American Thread Company. The influx of immigrants from as many as 15 different countries helps the viewer understand the complexity of managing mill workers speaking a variety of languages. The video describes the Slater Style of hiring practices in New England. This involved providing work for entire families including

husband, wife, and children. The variety of workers' nationalities often served as a basis for the development of churches and social clubs, many of which persist today in Willimantic.

Also included in the video is the role of the Jillson family in the development of the mills as well as the expansion of the Railroad industry. It is significant that in the mid 1800s as many as fifty trains passed through or stopped in Willimantic each day. Other stories relating to the rail service are provided by Robert LeMay a member of the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum.

Graphic shots of destruction as a result of the hurricane of 1938 and the construction of the Mansfield Hollow Dam in the 1950s are included in the time-line presentation of the video. The horrible effects of the notorious news story, "Heroin Town" are followed by the uplifting rebound of the town through grassroots activities such as the Boom Box Parade and the Third Thursday Events. These serve as a reminder of Willimantic's resilience and undying efforts toward reinventing itself. This is a "Don't Miss Showing" of what has become a classic video.

Video Showing:
Sunday, October 23 3:30pm
The Textile Museum
(Dugan Building)
411 Main Street, Willimantic, Ct
For information 860-456-1666
Free Admission

VALUES

by Dean Williams

Allen Augustus Weeden was a true Victorian gentleman. He was industrious, dedicated to service, and he comported himself with a nice blend of dignity and humor.



Allen was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1871. He was orphaned at an early age, probably in his late-teens and likely by an influenza epidemic that quickly took both parents. Thereon, he was raised

by two aunts. Not one to languish in the aftermath of loss, Allen went to work as a stock clerk in a large pharmacy. He was curious about the drugs that were used by doctors: What illnesses were being treated, dosages, and side effects. He also had a good memory. That, plus having a can-do attitude, was the potion for success.

He went to the New York College of Pharmacy for a year. Eventually, Allen bought the pharmacy and later, used the income to pay his way through Tufts Medical School. He was the first physician to do an internship at the Woonsocket Hospital in 1905-1906. In 1905, A. A. Weeden, MD, was licensed by Rhode Island to practice medicine, and in 1906 he opened his own practice.

In 1908, Allen married Miriam Holbrook Crosby Dean. Miriam was a beautiful woman, and with her hair up, she looked like Lillian Russell. (Though perhaps not as "full figured.") Miriam died in 1933, of pneumonia. Alas, there were no drugs then that were effective against such a virulent organism.

In the earliest days of his practice, Dr. Weeden would make house calls in a horse and buggy. In the winter he wore sealskin outer garments. Besides his medical bag, he carried with him a sterilizing tray and an obstetrics kit, just in case.

As you can imagine, Allen did not revert to the grunge look in his off-hours...of which there were few. Tank top and wool shorts at the beach, Abercrombie &

Fitch for his uniform in WW I, and tailored tweeds for the office and for when he and his family went to dinner and the theater.

Speaking of theater, Allen was in a play called "The Bat." Where and when, I don't know, but likely it was inspired by Bram Stoker's "Dracula."

In March of 1918, Dr. Weeden was inducted into the Army Medical Corps, and he served at Camp Lee, Virginia until July of 1919. His senior officer in the medical corps commended Allen for the special care he gave to his patients. The young men he treated—orthopedic surgery—had been in desperate shape when they were shipped back home, and 'Doc' Weeden gave function back to a lot of those young men. His nurses were very fond of Allen, too. When he was de-commissioned, many of them wrote nice letters and sent photos of themselves, in the manner of saying, 'Don't forget me.'

One particular incident showed that Doc Weeden also had a 'tough love' approach to treatment. A young soldier had been brought to the ward because he'd tried to commit suicide, by slashing his wrists. Doc sewed him up, gave him a sleeping pill, and kept him overnight in the ward. Several days later, the same fellow showed up again: Slashed wrists. As Doc Weeden sutured the fellow, he said to him, "If you try this again, I am not going to use any anaesthesia. Your choice, young fellow." That did the trick. A month or so later, the soldier headed home, ready to face his fears head-on. He wrote a note to Dr. Weeden, thanking him.

Now back home himself, and after having gotten his practice up and running again, Dr. Weeden was able to indulge himself by purchasing distinguished cars. He owned a Franklin, for example, and in later years, two Lincolns, the last being a 1939 Lincoln Zepher coupe.

He also owned a horse called Yankee. His original saddle for Yankee was a McClellan. (Remember who he was? And his branch of service?)

Allen married Grace Aldrich in 1935, and she died in 1941 or 1942. It was cancer, but Grace never complained, even in her last months.

Perhaps because Allen didn't want to have his office at home anymore, he moved his practice to a location closer to the Hospital. He had read a number of journal articles about the efficacy of diathermy for treating arthritis, so, reassured, he bought a diathermy apparatus. It produced good results. Allen was overjoyed by the birth of three grandsons but hugely saddened when the youngest died, at the age of four months.

As you can see, from this very brief history, Allen Augustus Weeden met death many times.

VALUES (Continued)

Nevertheless, he had a positive attitude about life and about meeting his obligations. When he died in 1947, dozens of people wrote very personal letters of condolence to his daughter. One man sent five dollars. He explained that when Dr. Weeden had treated him, he was broke. But now, things were a little better and he wanted her to have the money. It was his way of saying Thank you, Doc. Other people wrote that, years ago they didn't have enough money to pay the bill, so instead they gave him farm produce. One man even gave Dr. Weeden a .22 rifle!

When his daughter was going through her father's financial accounts, she estimated that he had been owed a great deal of money but had never tried to collect. Dr. Weeden knew that some of his patients were poor; his obligation was to provide the best treatment he was capable of and the sure knowledge that his office was always open.

A true Victorian gentleman, dedicated to service and his family. In that order.



Miriam Holbrook Crosby Dean

Windham Road Welcome Sign

At long last, the area under the WVNA Welcome to Willimantic sign on Windham Road (Route 32) is appropriately landscaped with some initial plantings. As you travel on the newly paved road, be sure to slow down to enjoy the improved colorful welcome gateway to the city.


Ladd's Nursery gave us 3 proposals, ranging from simple to more elaborate. The members in attendance at the September meeting selected the middle choice based on input from our garden savvy experts. Faith Kenton rightfully noted that the elevated site called for more plants, especially ones with height, in order to be more visible to passersby.

Unfortunately, that won't be totally possible until next spring when most of the plants will be in full bloom. For now, double knockout rose bushes and picea conica flank dormant daffodils, hemerocallis Happy Returns, and rudbeckia Goldstrum. Something definitely worth looking forward to in 2017.

Come One, Come All

Although the WVNA newsletter goes to more than 200 homes and businesses, many of whom live miles away, our active membership is relatively small and is seeking more ways to encourage people to participate in more of our activities. And, gratefully, we are fortunate that so many actually do become involved, as docents; Home Tour hosts; food preparers; and Jacks and Jills of all trades.

Now, we'd like to see you in a non-volunteer capacity. That is, please feel welcome to join us at the 4th Sunday monthly potlucks which take place at a different, gracious home each month. **You do not have to attend the meeting** (although we'd love it if you did) **nor must you bring something to eat.** We meet at 5:00 PM and are usually on the way home by 6:30 or so. It's a lot of fun! Great eats, lively conversation, and an opportunity to become better acquainted with a cross-section of very welcoming and interesting people. It would be our pleasure to get to know you better. See back cover for this month's host and agenda.

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WILLIMANTIC VICTORIAN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MINUTES

September 25, 2016 - Dugan Building, 411 Main Street, Willimantic

President Bob Horrocks called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m. The following members were in attendance: Jennifer Clark, Pam and Bob Horrocks, Faith G. Kenton, Barbara and Jim Lacey, Claire and Doug Lary, Michael Mahoney, Shirley Mustard and Pam Shooks, Heidi VanFlatern.

President Horrocks expressed appreciation to everyone who contributed to making our 2016 Garden Party a success. Special thanks to Becky and Alex Salustri for hosting and for providing the Jazz Trio (A Moment's Notice). Thanks were extended to Shirley, Jennifer White and Lynn for this month's Newsletter. In addition, thanks to all who provided information relating to their summer travels and activity for the newsletter.

Congratulations to Jennifer White and family who have purchased and are now living in the former Archer Jennings home at 84 Windham Street. (It was noted that Jennifer is opening a Tea House on High Street and historical photos of the restoration are posted.) Congratulations to those who received Certificates of Beautification. Over 115 Certificates have been awarded since the WVNA began to award them in 2004.

Thanks were extended to Jean DeSmet and Bob Hackmack for hosting our June Potluck Supper. Bob also thanked everyone who has prepared items for the Potluck Supper today at 202 Lewiston Avenue.

It was announced that the conversion of 869 Main Street to a Coffee Shop is now complete. Future WVNA meetings will be at Dugan Building, compliments of the Windham Textile and History Museum, or at homes as the need arises.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The WVNA meetings are typically the 4th Sunday of the month. This year there would be no opportunity to give out candy on Halloween for the "Trick or Treaters" on Main Street. The Chocolate Festival will be on February 11, 2017. The Progressive Dinner date is March 18, 2017, and the Home Tour weekend dates are June 1, 2, 3 and 4 of 2017.

GENERAL: Discussion about the Willimantic Food Co-Op which is growing and interested in expanding to a larger facility in the future. It is the oldest Co-op in the state. President Horrocks is seeking speakers for our meetings. Also, he suggested that perhaps members could view "YouTubes" concerning Victorian America. Pam Horrocks suggested that members who do not attend meetings be invited to the monthly Potluck Suppers. A suggestion was made to offer day trips to members to: the Mark Twain House, Hill-Stead House, Starr Park, Armsmead House or the Elizabeth Park Rose Garden in the spring. Perhaps offering carpooling.



QR Code Michael Mahoney brought up a new and unique suggestion which would expand on "...if these walls could talk," displays. More data could be made available on audio video files which interested people with smart phones with a QR Reader could access by clicking on a QR code connected to the subject. (This is somewhat similar to the extremely popular "Pokémon" video craze.) Michael will do an example for us. It could be possible to post additional video recordings similarly on topics on the WVNA website.

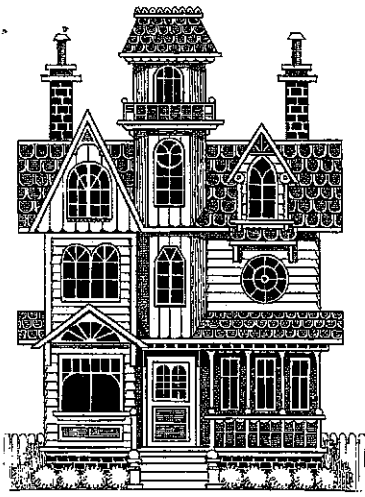
TOPIC: Design Suggestions for "Welcome to Willimantic" Sign (Route 32)

President Horrocks provided handouts from Ladd's Garden Center with plant ideas. There were three suggestions and the listing of the types of plants, arrangement and prices were shown. Discussion followed and it was noted that a maintenance plan may need to be added. Considerations for watering were discussed and members volunteered to assist with watering. A majority vote was obtained for Plan B.

The guest speaker, Lance Ladd, presented for review and questions on the topic. He would be able to rearrange the plants to accommodate the chosen plan in the space available. A once-a-year maintenance plan would include mulching for \$100.00. He advised that during the heat of the summer, watering is necessary with 4-5 gallons buckets for each shrub.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. and members were invited to the Potluck Supper at 5:30 at the home of the Horrocks.

Respectfully submitted, Pamela M. Shooks, Secretary



Victorian Willimantic Neighborhood Association

In care of Pam Horrocks
P.O. Box 555, Willimantic, CT 06226 • 456-1666

Membership Categories

- Regular Membership:** Supporters of the preservation and promotion of the Victorian history, architecture and character of Willimantic.
- Business Membership:** A company in the business community wishing to support the mission of the association.
- Honorary Membership:** A lifetime membership bestowed on a person making an exemplary contribution to the organization.

Annual Memberships		Business/Corporate Memberships		Life Memberships	
Student/Senior	\$15.00	Business	\$55.00	Life Member	\$500.00
Individual	\$20.00	Corporate Sponsor	\$100.00		
Family	\$25.00	Corporate Patron	\$500.00	Life Benefactor	
Contributing	\$55.00	Corporate Benefactor	\$1000.00		\$1000.00
Sustaining	\$105.00				

Please complete the form and mail with your check to:
Pam Horrocks, P.O. Box 555, Willimantic, CT 06226

Member Name: _____

Contact Name (if business membership) _____

Street Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

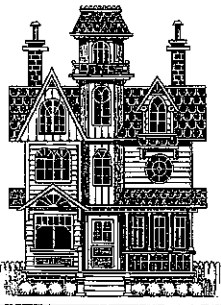
Phone () _____ FAX: () _____ Date _____

E-mail: _____

Signature _____

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the purpose of the Association to provide education and to assist the community in the preservation and promotion of the Victorian history (c.1830-1930), architecture and character of Willimantic.



Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 555

Willimantic, CT 06226

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Please call on the WVNA Officers & Board for Information or Assistance:

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Vice President, Barbara Lacey	456-1214
Secretary, Pamela Shooks	456-3135
Treasurer, Claire Lary	456-3088
Membership, Pam Horrocks*	456-1666
Home Tour & Newsletter, Lynn Duval*	456-4476
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Board Members

Jennifer Clark	208-6257
Sue Humes	423-0576
James Lacey	456-1214
Gordon MacDonald	423-8845

* Non-voting members

Photo Credits:

Dean Williams

The Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood Association is the key to communication in regard to the Hill Section, the Home Tour, Economic Development and a better quality of life in our town.

Join today if you have not already done so. Send us your ideas and thoughts, participate in the meetings and events.

Be a part of this wonderful community and this extraordinary neighborhood.

Call Bob Horrocks (860) 456-1666.

Calendar of Events

Next Meeting of the
Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood
Association

Windham Textile & History Museum
Dugan Building, 411 Main St.
Sunday, October 23, 3:30 pm

Video Showing:
Willimantic Over The Years

Potluck Supper to follow
Faith and Steve Kenyon Home
246 North Street