



# Loom and Spindle

THE MILL MUSEUM OF CONNECTICUT /  
WINDHAM TEXTILE AND HISTORY MUSEUM

## COMING EVENTS:

- **Fifth Annual Snow Ball.** Sat., Jan. 16, 8-12 PM. Windham Town Hall auditorium. Music by the Flamingos. Silent auction. Refreshments, cash bar. Black tie optional. Limited seating. \$16 per person; \$100 Snow Angel.
- **Exhibit: Doll Houses: A Miniature World.** Feb. 5 through June 13. \$5 per person.
- **Opening Reception: Doll Houses: A Miniature World.** Fri., Feb. 5, 5:30-7 PM.
- **Children's Valentine & Chocolate Mouse Workshop.** Sat., Feb. 13, 1-3 PM.
- **Doll House Fair: Workshop and Doll Hospital.** Sun., April 11, 1-4 PM.
- **Tenement Tour Bus Trip.** Sat., April 17, 7 AM to 7 PM. \$70 per person. Meet at the Museum.
- **Mother-Daughter-Doll Victorian Tea.** Sun., May 2, 2-4 PM.

For reservations, call Brooke at 860-377-7755.

## DONATIONS WANTED

The Museum is already gathering paper, bows, and tape for its Holiday Gift Wrapping fundraiser for next year. Anyone with items to donate, please contact Brooke at 860-377-7755, or bring them by the Museum. Thanks!

## DOLL HOUSES: A MINIATURE WORLD

BY MICHELE PALMER,  
VOLUNTEER EXHIBITS CURATOR

A new exhibit, "Doll Houses: A Miniature World," will open Feb. 5, 2010 at the Windham Textile and History Museum, and run through June 13, 2010.

The exhibit will include dozens of doll houses and dolls from around the world.

The centerpiece of the exhibit is a magnificent doll house recently donated to the museum by Helen Henderson of Washington, D.C. Hand made in England and modeled after an actual Georgian London mansion that still stands, the wooden doll house is beautifully illuminated with miniature light fixtures. Its twelve rooms, filled with 19th-century-style furnishings, are intricately detailed and include incised wood floor boards, six fireplaces, a hardwood staircase with banister and mahogany hand rails (all polished to a rich gleam), and a working dumbwaiter that runs from the kitchen to the dining room. The front doors and windows are glazed with real glass and the plaster



decorations in front are individually handmade.

The exhibit will also feature a play area and a building area, where the Museum will be constructing a Victorian doll house, and invite children of all ages to help.

The following events are planned to coincide with the exhibit:

Friday, Feb. 5, 5:30-7 PM:  
Opening reception.

Saturday, Feb. 13, 1-3 PM:  
Children's Valentine & Chocolate Mouse Workshop.

Sunday, April 11, 1-4 PM:  
Doll House Fair.

Sunday, May 2, 2-4 PM:  
Mother/Daughter/Doll Victorian Tea.

The Doll House Fair on April 11 will include a doll-making workshop led by Charlotte Anderson, a reading and book-signing of "Dahlia" by author/illustrator Barbara McClintock, a doll hospital (bring your injured dolls for repairs), and a miniatures sales event.

## NEW KIDS CLUB AT THE MUSEUM

The Mill Museum is starting a special new club for children ages 4-15. For a \$5.00 annual Threads Kids Club membership, kids will receive *Threads*, a monthly kids newsletter. They will also get half price admission to all the Museum's kids events, and free admission to the Museum when accompanied by a paying adult. Adults can purchase membership gift certificates for the holidays. It's the perfect stocking stuffer for the inquisitive child! For more information, call 860-377-7755 and ask for Brooke.



***Threads*— the monthly newsletter of the new Threads Kids Club at the Mill Museum — will look like this.**

## MUSEUM WEB SITE EXPANDED, IMPROVED

The Museum's Web site, [www.millmuseum.org](http://www.millmuseum.org), has undergone some dramatic changes. It has a new look and has been greatly expanded, with dozens of Web pages of new material. The Museum's Executive Director, Brooke Shannon, designed and built the new Web site, and volunteer Collections Manager Jamie Eves has contributed many pages of text and photographs.

"The old Web site was good as far as it went," says Shannon, "but the new site can be updated more easily and more frequently, is easier to navigate, and has far more content."

"We want the Museum's Web site to be the first place people go when researching the history of textiles and the textile industry in Connecticut," adds Eves. "We added many pages of historical content, including numerous text articles by various writers. We added scores of photographs from the Museum's collections. We have video and slide shows. The content is fantastic for a museum our size, and it will continue to grow as we add more content."

Shannon and Eves decided to continue to add content while the site was live. "We wanted to get it up quickly," says Shannon, "so that visitors could use it." Eves concurs, adding, "Because the site is being built live, it's a little rough. But it means that every time a visitor logs on, they will find something new."

Studies show that today's museums rely to large Web sites with lots of content. While it might seem that museums that put a lot of content on the Web might be competing with themselves, the reserve is actually true. When visitors see a lot of content on the Web site, it whets their appetite and makes them more likely to want to visit the museum, to see the artifacts in person, or to find out what else the museum has on display.

The revamped Web site features video of mill machines in the Museum's collection actually running, giving Web browsers a taste of the sights and sounds of the factory floor.

Visitors will also find a "History" section, with articles written by

Eves, Thomas Beardsley, and others about such topics as mill workers, mill machinery, the early industrial ecosystem, the meaning of the name "Willimantic," sewing machines, textile entrepreneurs, Connecticut railroads, preindustrial mills, and more.

A "Textiles" section, featuring a "textile of the month" selected by volunteer Exhibits Curator Michele Palmer, is in the works and will appear soon, giving the Museum a chance to show off its collection of historic fabrics and textiles.

The Web site has an "Education" section with slide shows and other materials for teachers, put together by Bev York.

A "Permanent Exhibits" section gives browsers a virtual tour of the Museum, while a "Temporary Exhibits" section not only provides information about the Museum's current and future rotating exhibits, but also photos of past exhibits for those who may have missed them.

"There is so much to see on our revamped Web site," says Eves. "Our members really should check it out."



**This is one of the dozens of historic photographs and images featured on the Mill Museum's revamped and expanded Web site. Taken in 1943, it shows a worker doing something he shouldn't — putting his hand inside a carding machine. It was probably intended for a safety brochure.**

FROM THE COLLECTIONS:  
**THE HELEN HENDERSON COLLECTION OF  
 VICTORIAN PARLOR FURNITURE**

BY JAMIE EVES, VOLUNTEER COLLECTIONS MANAGER

The Windham Textile and History Museum has a marvelous new collection of antique Victorian parlor furniture, thanks to a generous donation by Helen Henderson of Washington, DC. The collection contains more than 20 pieces, including a love seat, several chairs, tables, lamps, and footstools.

The furniture once belonged to Henderson's grandfather, a turn-of-the-century resident of Emporia, Pennsylvania. Henderson had some of the pieces reupholstered, but otherwise they are in their original condition.

Henderson was moving to a smaller house and looking for a good home for the furniture. She offered to donate the pieces to any museum that would put them all on display. She even paid for the shipping.

The Mill Museum heard about the offer through the Connecticut League of History Organizations, which sent an e-mail about it to all of its members. The Museum received the notice as a League member, but also received e-mails from several other League members — including the Windham, CT, Historical Society — who had also seen the original notice.

The Museum has long wanted a full collection of Victorian parlor furniture for its c. 1900 mill manager's home living history display, to compliment its collection of Victorian dining room and bedroom furniture.

According to the Museum's Educational Consultant, Bev York, at the turn of the century, middle class and upper class people liked to have their homes crowded with furniture and other items. It was an era when the "cluttered look" was in! Thanks to the invention of inexpensive, factory-made furniture, it was possible for even middle class families to show off their "affluence" by displaying as many items as they could. Thanks to Henderson's generous donation, the Museum's mill manager's home display is even more authentic than before.



**NEW WALKING TOUR MAP OF  
 HISTORIC MILL  
 NEIGHBORHOOD AVAILABLE**

Thanks to a generous grant from the SBM Foundation, the Mill Museum now has an elegant new walking map of historic Willimantic, CT, featuring three historic walks: the Mills, Mill Housing, and the Bridges of Willimantic. Copies are \$2.00 and are available at the Museum's Linen Company Store gift shop.

**CREDIT UNION OFFER TO  
 MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS  
 AND STAFF**

The Northeast Family Federal Credit Union is offering membership to any and all of the Mill Museum's volunteers and staff. Any volunteer or staff member who is interested should contact. Visit [www.Textile.Creditunionmansaves.com](http://www.Textile.Creditunionmansaves.com) for more information.

**MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FALL 2009**

If you have already renewed your membership, thank you!

Student/Senior, \$10 \_\_\_\_\_

Sustaining, \$50 \_\_\_\_\_

Individual, \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

Patron, \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

Family/Household, \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor, \$250 \_\_\_\_\_

Benefactor, above \$250 \_\_\_\_\_

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.

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

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

**THE MILL MUSEUM  
OF CONNECTICUT**  
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**BUS TRIP TO NEW YORK'S TENEMENT HOUSE  
MUSEUM, LOWER EAST SIDE PLANNED FOR APRIL**

On April 17, 2010, the Windham Textile and History Museum – in partnership with the McSweeney Regional Senior Center and the Willimantic, CT, Parks and Recreation Department – is sponsoring a bus trip to New York City to tour the historic Lower East Side and visit the famed Tenement House Museum, Daily Forward Building, Bargain Street, Kosar's Bialy Bakery, and Russ and Daughters Famous Deli. It will be a trip loaded with history!

Experience American dreams and immigrant New York. In the late 1800s and early 1900s tens of thousands of immigrants annually poured into the modern metropolis. Many found their way to Manhattan's teeming Lower East Side, home to Eastern European Jewish shirtwaist workers, Czech cigar makers, and Irish colliers. Others headed north to Connecticut – including a Polish family whose bible is in the Mill Museum's collections – to work in the textile mills or on the farms.

The Tenement House Museum at 97 Orchard Street, NYC, preserves a typical 1920s New York tenement building, left intact by a landlord who closed it – a true time capsule of the immigrant era. It is a unique museum, a must-see for history buffs, descendants of the "new immigrants" who helped build industrial America, and anyone interested in immigrant and textile history.

The Daily Forward Building was the home of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, the leading Yiddish-language newspaper of the era and the voice of turn-of-the-century America's Jewish population.

In addition to guides in New York and at the Tenement House Museum, the



Mill Museum will have two of its own historians on the trip: Bev York and Jamie Eves.

The tour will depart from the Windham Textile and History Museum at 7 AM and return at 7 PM. The cost per person is \$70. Lunch in New York will be on your own at Katz's Deli. For reservations and information, call 860-377-7755 and ask for Brooke. A \$25 payment is due with your reservation. Final payment is due March 12, 2010.