

The Mill Museum



June 2026

Summer events are here! Enjoy the cultural and outdoor opportunities that abound in our community!

SAQA-CT juried art quilt exhibition open through June 28!



The museum's juried art quilt exhibition, "Local Color 7: Circular Thinking," showcases fiber art by members of (and is sponsored by) Studio Art Quilt Associates, Connecticut. The ingenious, colorful pieces reveal to visitors the inspiring stories that compelled the quilters to create these unique and masterful works of art. They vary in size and shape, and include 3D sculpture; abstract experiments with color and texture, and figurative depictions of animals or loved ones.

The artists' broad scope examines the meanings, symbolism, and experiences evoked by the circle's infinite shape. Featured in the museum's Bev York Room, this exhibition celebrates diverse explorations of an image found in cultures through time and around the world. Don't miss this fabulous show!

~~~~~

## **"Thread City" Permanent Exhibit**

"Thread City: The Rise and Fall of the Connecticut Textile Industry," the museum's permanent exhibition, shares the Bev York Room with rotating temporary exhibits. Jamie Eves researched, curated, designed, and installed the "discovery" exhibit, following the course of local textile production. Visitors travel through time, from industry origins in preindustrial textile production, through the Industrial Revolution, labor history, mill cities and towns, to deindustrialization. This overview of the industry's profound influence on Connecticut introduces and contextualizes the museum and its other installations, with over 100 artifacts from the museum collection connected to each other by the stories they tell. "Thread City" is continually updated; QR codes will eventually link to online activities, the museum's online catalog and objects, and other museums' websites telling similar stories.

~~~~~

"Dyed in the Wool" exhibit opens in July!



The museum is abuzz with activity preparing for Senior Curator Quinlan Kearney's exciting new exhibit, "Dyed in the Wool." On view starting July 3; opening reception July 11. From Quinlan: "'Dyed in the Wool' is a three-part exhibit about the history of textile dyes. The first phase, Plants and Plantations, explores natural dyes used primarily in the colonial era. Patrons will learn many different

natural materials that can be used to dye textiles, and about the dyeing process itself. In the second phase, Farm to Factory, patrons will learn about early synthetic dyes and the ways they changed the world of textiles, including the fashion industry and the overall ecology of the factory processes. In the third and final phase, Modern Matters, we move into the modern era, exploring the benefits of synthetic dyes in modern industry, including those used by the American Thread Company, as well as the ecological hazards that result from these dyes and what we as a society can do to be responsible about their use. Some pieces of the early phases will remain on display throughout the run and we're planning a number of activities, demonstrations, and talks throughout." Join us for the opening, and for activities and events in the months to follow!

~~~~~

### **The Mill Museum needs YOU!**

Volunteering is a great way to stitch into the inner workings of the Museum. We function thanks to the varied skills and creative energy of a dedicated team of volunteers. Tell your friends! We welcome interest and value ideas from our neighbors and community members! For more on how you can get involved, see [the museum's support and volunteer page](#).

~~~~~

Bobbin' Around the Museum and Community...

~~~~~

### **June is Pride month!**

Celebrate around the state with our LGBTQIA+ family and community at parades, art events, music performances, film festivals, food trucks, vendors and more. The CT Visit Pride site has more details! [Willi Food Co-op Pride Party](#), June 20, 12-4pm: 91 Valley St., Willimantic. Our friends at the Willimantic Food Co-op are throwing a Pride Party! Community thrives when people from all backgrounds can come together in a supportive, accepting, joyful environment. This celebration reflects the Co-op's commitment to inclusivity, compassion, and creating a place where everyone belongs.

~~~~~

CT Open House Day, Saturday, June 13!

The 22nd annual [Connecticut Open House Day](#) celebrates the diverse, unique people and places making our state special. Windham County (and Northeastern CT and the rest of the state!) offers a variety of cultural and other attractions. Come learn (or re-learn!) about our state's textile industry and culture through numerous exhibit spaces. Explore our vast collection of industrial equipment, sewing machines, spinning and weaving equipment, and other historic artifacts. The Mill Museum, participating in Open House Day, is pleased to offer all visitors free admission for the entire day!

~~~~~

### **"America 250, Still Revolutionary" 4th Sundays, monthly, 4-6pm**

The Mill Museum proudly hosts this series commemorating our country's semiquincentennial! **June 28**, historian Bev York presents on local founders and the Signing of the Declaration of Independence. Runs through December, in historic Mill Museum Dugan Hall. Free and open to the public; donations welcome to support the museum. For more information, see the [museum Events page](#).

~~~~~

Jillson House Museum programs on Windham's 250th anniversary

Jillson House Museum, 627 Main St., Willimantic. These presentations profile Windham history, those who were instrumental in founding our country, and life in 1776. Advance registration required for each program: JillsonHouseMuseum.com. (Free except for any material fees; see [the Jillson House Events page](#).)

June 24, 5:30-6:30pm, Tavern Night with the Wives of Henry 8th; and on our nation's (and town's!) 250th birthday, **July 4**, 1-3pm, right after the Boom Box Parade: Signing the Declaration of Independence.

Mill Museum Executive Director Charles Olsen and board Vice President Michael Mahony will present on the following topics:

- Windham's Mills & Their Contributions to America's Industrialization, August 15, 1-3pm: Charles
- Tavern Night With Woody Guthrie, August 26, 5:30-6:30pm: Michael
- Penknife Workshop, September 5, 11-3pm: Michael

~~~~~

## **Spinning Bee, 4th Saturdays monthly, June 27, 10am-1pm**

Master spinner and weaver Peggy Church leads this free drop-in event. Please let us know you plan to come by contacting [Peggy Church](#). Spinners of all levels welcome! Attendees may also bring long-abandoned or new pieces of knitting or crochet, or other crafts projects. Peggy and other spinners may bring in interesting craft items like wooden Navajo spindles or book charkhas (small portable wheels originating in India that spinners use to make cotton rolls called punis). Spinners also brought in interesting items like an Inkle Loom, another portable-sized wonder that weavers use for making belts, bags, and camera straps. Spinner Mark may bring fleeces to show the group (all for sale): skirted Jacob fleeces from the Stamford Nature Center; as well as some soft brown llama, "if anyone wants to give that a try."

At the May 28 [Mansfield Garden Gate Club](#) Mansfield Library meeting, Peggy gave a natural dye presentation, detailing history and an overview of dyeing using native CT plants. Great flax wheel at her side for spinning demonstrations, she also displayed samples of dyed fibers, textiles, and garments that she spun, wove, knitted, and sewed.

~~~~~

Connecticut Art and Garden Tour, June 13-14, 10am-5pm

Join us June 13 at the Mill Museum for CT Open House Day, but also on this busy weekend for the 2026 annual [Art and Garden Tour](#) of Northeastern Connecticut! Come out, relax, and enjoy a tour of artists' gardens and studios around the beautiful northeastern Connecticut towns of Mansfield, Willington, Coventry, and Ashford.

~~~~~

## **ATHA "Hook-In," June 13, 9am-3pm**

The [Association of Traditional Hooking Artists](#)) [Quiet Corner Chapter](#) invites crafters and friends to gather for a day of rug hooking and other fiber arts. Woodstock Fairgrounds, 543 CT-169. Enjoy a display of hand-hooked rugs, and a giant rug hooking raffle basket. Vendors offer handcrafted baskets, hand-dyed wool fabrics, specialty ribbon and yarn, hooking patterns and supplies, and fine handmade goods. Not a rug hooker but interested in learning? Bring current projects to work on or come be inspired to try something new. Demonstrations all day include basic rug hooking, rug braiding, punch needle, and basket and broom making.

~~~~~

3rd Thursday Street Fest, June 18, 6-9pm



Main Street, Willimantic. Free and open to all, this beloved annual warm-weather tradition features Main Street shops open for your business, as well as crafts vendors, local associations and charities, food vendors offering delicious fresh fare, and numerous dance and music performers. Stop by the Mill Museum's table to pick up a gift or try your hand at making a craft! Produced by Willimantic Renaissance, Inc.

~~~~~

### **Poetry in the Park, 4th Thursdays (July 23), 6:30 pm; through September**

Julia de Burgos Park, corner of Curbstone Way and Jackson St., Willimantic. Bring chair or blanket, and a picnic! The cherished annual Poetry in the Park July

reading features Sharmont "Influence" Little. The nationally acclaimed poet, playwright, actor, cultural organizer, and educator was the inaugural Poet Laureate of New Haven, and has organized public readings and other events centering Black voices and community resilience.

~~~~~

Get outside!

Spring is well underway and summer's just around the corner. The explosion of lush green foliage and riot of fragrant flowers signal many opportunities to get active in the fresh air. Find events hosted by nature organizations like Joshua's Trust and Last Green Valley, both longtime museum partners. If you can't get there in person, check out the Mill Museum's virtual exhibit, Murals of a Mill Town; LGV also has virtual events.

Pathways to Nature Black History Hike,
Wyndham Land Trust Nightingale Forest,
Saturday, June 27, 10:00am-12:30pm (rain date 6/28). Taft Pond Road entrance near 4H Camp. History buffs can enjoy Pomfret's beautiful natural scenery and learn local history with historian Donna Dufresne, on the CT Land Conservation Council's first hike with the trust. The Quiet Corner hardwood forest hosts a small burial ground dating back to the 1700s, where visitors can "explore the remarkable lives of Jonathan and Patience Randall, whose legacy broadens our understanding of history and slavery in New England." Limited space; all hikers must register here. Intermediate 3-mile hike with some uphill climbs and muddy conditions. Sturdy footwear necessary; bring water, sunscreen, bug repellent; walking poles suggested.

~~~~~



### **July 4th Boom Box Parade and America250 celebration in Jillson Park!**

The 41st annual WILI Willimantic Boombox Parade produced by Willimantic Renaissance, Inc. marks 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The landmark day of community celebration includes a free concert on the historic Shaboo Stage: 1:30pm, Jillson Park opens 12:30, after parade.

Food trucks will offer everything from Mexican fare and fried chicken to sweet treats and desserts. Immersive "Historical Vignettes" will bring the American Revolution to life through interactive scenes including a colonial schoolhouse, blacksmith and loom demonstrations, and period punishment stocks. A float contest will be held before the main celebration. Programs include:

- 2025 Grammy Award–winning pianist Zaccai Curtis and Quartet, Best Latin Jazz Album, "Cubop Lives!"
- the nearly 100-member Windham Concert Band
- the Windham Troubadours, led by Bruce John
- historical reenactors like "George Washington," "Israel Putnam," and "Samuel Huntington"
- video presentations, featuring local youth reciting the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence, set to music

~~~~~

More summer events:

~~~~~

### **Mill Museum Weaving lessons with Midge Colombo!**

Curious about weaving? Come and experience throwing the shuttle on a floor loom. Choose your colors and design. Walk away with a hand towel or decorative table square. Express yourself in a textile! Master weaver Midge Colombo, together with Peggy Church and her granddaughter AG Church, Donna McLaughlin, and Susan Bruno, designed a plan for weaving experiences. Small class size allows individual attention, no prior experience necessary. [info@millmuseum.org](mailto:info@millmuseum.org) Classes: Saturday July 25 or Sunday August 9, 12-3pm, Museum weaving classroom. \$45 (incl. materials).

~~~~~



Wadsworth Atheneum exhibit, "Framing American Democracy: Radical Roots"

Thru 9/27/26, 600 Main St., Hartford. Just in time for America250, this major exhibition of textiles, paintings, and sculptures examines who has been able to, and who has historically been excluded from, participating in democracy. It "untangles the Connecticut roots of American democracy and its legacy.... Objects ranging from paintings and sculptures to decorative arts and ephemera help reframe Connecticut as a hotbed of radical thought." Reflecting on the meanings of "American notions of freedom and liberty ... at different moments in time, these same objects offer powerful lessons on the interplay between myth, memory, and history."

~~~~~

## Museum memberships make great gifts!

### 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 |
| 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                                     |

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.