

— HISTORY —

# 'The Yarn:' A glimpse back into the life of a community

*Part three of three*

The summer 1982 edition of the American Thread Co.'s magazine *The Yarn* provides a glimpse of community events of 20 years ago, as the company's long history in Willimantic was coming to an end.

It was originally formed in 1854 as the Willimantic Linen Co. by the amalgamation of several small cotton mills.

The company produced its first magazine in the 1920s, known as the ATCO "Staron." Content generally revolved around worker-management issues, such as attendance awards, retirements, long service and sports.

A section of the 1982 *Yarn* Magazine entitled "ATCO Scene" related the career of Arnold Shefer, manager of Physical Research and Development, and his retirement party held at the Willimantic Country Club.

Shefer's employment at ATCO began in 1948 when he was hired

as a lab assistant. He became superintendent of quality control of cotton manufacturing in 1952. Seven years later Shefer was promoted to assistant superintendent of cot-

ton production, and between 1965 and 1969 he was the superintendent of Spun Synthetics.

In 1970, Shefer became Research and Development Manager. Shefer's retirement party, attended by over 120 people, and photographs show him receiving congratulations from ATCO manager Ted Shaw, and examining his retirement gift.

Despite the fact that within three years, the entire ATCO plant would close, a new canteen was built on the third floor of Mill No. 6.



*Tom  
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New tables, chairs, and vending machines enabled workers to enjoy fresh coffee and doughnuts. ATCO sincerely hoped its workers would enjoy the new comforts. A prize drawing was held to celebrate the opening of the new Mill 6 canteen, and Jenny Ingles, of Industrial Winding was photographed with her winning prize, a new Polaroid camera.

The Willimantic ATCO Employees Federal Credit Union advertised its services in the magazine, and reminded plant workers that convenient payroll deductions were available, and that members received life insurance that matched the balance in regular savings up to \$2,000.

Loans were funded from the members' savings, and the union also ran Christmas and vacation clubs.

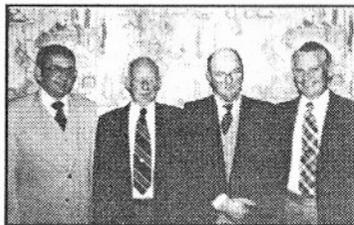
A small section on Page Six listed 13 employees who had just completed a seven-week Red Cross first Aid Course. They were

Richard Bernier of package dye, Joseph Giorgo (personnel), Richard Lawrence (winding), Gabrielle Marion (twisting), Gary McNally (dye lab), Harold Monroe (distribution), Zolton Paloczi (shuttle bobbin), Brenda Perkins (quality control), Betty Presby (technology), George Sabo (maintenance), Patricia Sposato (personnel), Glenn Whitehouse (package dye), Tom Valone (finance). A photograph shows Dick Bernier applying an inflatable splint to Harold Monroe's arm while Glenn Whitehouse and Gary McNally look on.

ATCO's trucking division held its annual safety banquet in April 1982 at the Clark House Restaurant on North Street, where four drivers were honored for their safe driving awards. Terminal Supervisor Everett Ladd, along with Fred Eslick and Robert Thornberry of the American Thread plant at Old Fort, N.C., presented the awards

to Chris Turner, who had driven for 17 years without a preventable accident, and to Andre Marrotte (17 years), Peter Donahue (16 years) and Hubert Emery (5 years).

If you recognized yourself or friends and relatives from the 1982 edition, and would like copies of the photographs published in the issue, e-mail me at [threadcity.com](mailto:threadcity.com) or call 450-1604.



*From left: Peter Donahue, Everett Ladd, Hubert Emery and Fred Eslick at a 1982 function at Clark's.*

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