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— HISTORY —

'The Yarn' had many tales about ATCO

The Yarn, 1973

Several weeks ago this column explored an edition of the American Thread Co. newsletter, the Yarn, published in 1982 shortly before the mills closed down. It created a good deal of interest, and Peter Donohue who was featured in the Yarn 20 years ago, has provided a copy of one of its earliest editions dated July 1973.

The plant manager used his column to wish everyone a safe summer, and then included August Zirniss (shuttle bobbin) with 21 years service, Joseph St. Germaine (watchman) 45 years, Alice Vincent (coning), 16 years, Monika Zalatz (coning) 15 years, and Monika Lubans (finishing) 20 years.

Two brief biographies recounted the American Thread careers of Clifford Matthews and John Tolokan. Matthews had just been promoted from third shift bonder tender to the assistant foreman of c.p. finishing.

He is seen being congratulated by the plant manager, and is

dressed in what can loosely be described as typical '70s gear. Matthews had been employed at ATCO since 1970. He was a recent graduate of Eastern Connecticut State College, and his marriage to Anne Arpin of Baltic was planned for Aug. 4, 1973.

A smiling John P. Tolokan, the supervisor of printing control, is seen at his desk shortly before his retirement on May 31, 1973. Tolokan worked at the Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. on leaving school, and joined ATCO in 1939 as an order checker in the packing department, and later worked in the box shop.

He left for Army service in 1942 but returned the following and entered the printing department. Tolokan, who played and taught the violin, lived with his wife on



Tom
Beardsley

Moulton Court in Willimantic.

This early edition of the Yarn had less local detail than its 1982 counterpart, and several pages were filled with Connecticut vacation destinations, recipes, word games, cartoons and a fishing column.

However, it features a tour of the dye package winding section of the plant, where synthetic threads were loosely wound onto drums for dyeing.

The healthy condition of the economy in 1973 is illustrated in a column from the personnel office appealing for second shift winders. All interested parties were asked to contact Gladys Rivera at the office.

Art Berliner, a second shift frame cleaner, submitted a column on how best to see Baltimore oriole birds in the countryside around Willimantic, something he never saw while growing up in New York City.

The issue also had a bulletin board column where ATCO employees were informed that



Gladys Durkee, a worker in American Thread's package winding department, poses for the camera in 1973.

Charles Graybeal had a new boat, Bill and Lisa Kaminski were expecting their first child, Ed Marzzolf and Deane Young remained undefeated in the ATCO golf league, and Dixie Pinckney, a clerk typist in the personnel office, was to marry Fransceco Silvestri, a double ender opener in the c.p. finishing department.

After honeymooning in Italy, the couple planned to settle in Willimantic.

Local publications such as the Yarn are an excellent source to explore community history, so check out the trunks, attics and chests and let me know if you find any old issues.