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## Willimantic's 'Treasures' preserved in special *Chronicle* anniversary section

Part one of two

In January 1977, the *Chronicle* published an 80-page supplement entitled "Treasures" in celebration of the local newspaper's 100th anniversary. Although full of local history, today it provides a picture of life in the *Chronicle* circulation region—a generation ago. *Chronicle* editor, the late Bill Pike, called the supplement an anniversary gift to its readers, inviting them to participate in the past, and celebrate the region's beauty and diversity.

The opening article by staff writer Bill MODOONO, today a sports columnist for the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, featured an appreciation of world-renowned naturalist, writer and photographer Edwin Way TEALE (1899-1980). Since his death three years after this interview, environmentalists have compared Teale with world famous American naturalists such as John Muir, Henry David Thoreau and John Burroughs.

Teale told MODOONO that northeastern Connecticut had a "companionable landscape" and he described his hometown of Hampton as "The Gem of the East." Teale also noted that he had documented 145 varieties of birds, along with foxes, raccoons, possums, beavers and skunks on his 130 acres of farmland.

News editor Daryl Perch, today a Hartford Courant editorial

writer, followed MODOONO with a piece that hailed the beauty of Chaplin, as described by a California transplant to the town, Sonja Weber. E. M a l c o l m



Tom Beardsley

Stannard, the *Chronicle's* editorial page editor, chipped in with a historical piece about Columbia's Augustus Hazard, who became America's premier gunpowder manufacturer during the 19th century. The community of Hazardville, near Enfield, where Hazard lived and manufactured his product, is named for this Columbia native. In writing of

nearby Coventry, Janice Gould featured a biography of that town's famous son, Nathan Hale.

"Treasures" featured vignettes of local people, such as the Windham Center librarian Amy Anderson, the three generations of the Rodriguez family who were running Hampton's only repair garage, James Insalaco, the manager of Windham Airport and Carol and Dr. Imogene Tarcauanu of Lebanon. The former was a retired Romanian diploma and the latter a local pediatrician and the head Lebanon's Historical Society. Bob Brown wrote an article about the town's wealthy benefactor, 63-year-old Hugh Trumbull Adams, who had provided the funds to help preserve Jonathan Trumbull Jr.'s historic

house as a museum. Pam Shorey followed with a piece on Andover's Yeoman family, a political dynasty in that town.

The supplement's focus moved north to the town of Willington and that community's rich industrial history, as represented by the town's Hall cotton mills.

Lucy Bartlett Crosbie, the *Chronicle's* publisher who conceived the idea of publishing "Treasures," then focused on William, Asa and Seth Jillson, who developed the cotton industry at Willimantic in the 1820s. Mrs. Crosbie brought attention to the Jillson House, built in 1825 by William Jillson and explained how the late Dr. Brae Rafferty, the Windham Historical Society's president, placed the building on

the National Register of Historical Places to ensure that it became eligible for federal funding.

Stannard explained how in 1864 the expanding Willimantic Linen Co. ensured that it would have sufficient waterpower to drive its spinning machines in its new mill.

Although the Willimantic River dropped 90 feet between Bridge Street and Sodom, providing an excellent source of waterpower, there were problems during dry spells and the flow decreased.

Subsequently, the Thread City's largest company flooded an area of Columbia to create Columbia Lake, and built a dam to provide a back-up source of water when needed. Unfortunately, by the 1870s, the power proved to be

insufficient and the company introduced steam power to the mills in 1880 as an alternative back-up source of power.

Continued next week



Windham Center librarian Amy Anderson is one of the many "Treasures" featured in the *Chronicle's* 1977 supplement.