

FEB 22, 1992

THAT WAS THE WEEK THAT WAS

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF LOCAL NEWS
ITEMS FOR 1892, 1917, 1942 AND 1967

1892

After much heated discussion, the bicentennial committee decided to hold the celebration of Windham's 1692 incorporation this year and not in 1893. It was also agreed to hold two celebrations, one in Windham Center and one in Willimantic, on separate days. The committee hoped the state would pick up part of the bill. Until then, they approached 100 of Windham's leading citizens, and asked them to donate \$25 each, which would be repaid once the legislature came up with the funds to finance the celebration.

Willimantic's German born population formed a mutual aid society, the "Verain Concordia, " and rented a meeting room in the Chronicle building on Church Street. The Society organized social events, but its main purpose was to educate members in the requirements of American citizenship.

1917

Willimantic had to contend with traffic problems caused by automobiles. The gasoline driven "beasts" were abandoned by their owners in the middle of Main Street, as they entered stores and businesses. Horse drawn traffic had to negotiate around them . City center traders were also furious with the chaos caused by jitney drivers who parked their vehicles on Church, North, Main and Railroad Streets as they awaited potential fares disgorge by the railroad depot.

A fiery situation was diffused by policemen and an Irish lady on Jackson Street. A motor car and a single horse drawn buggy heading to Mansfield collided with two sets of teams heading into Willimantic and became locked side by side across the street outside St Joseph's Church. Bodies and pieces of gasoline and equine propelled vehicles were strewn across the street. There were several cuts and bruises but no one was seriously injured. The drivers and their passengers began to argue and brawl, but a "large husky woman" appeared on the scene and grabbed one of the combatants by the scruff of his neck and the rear of his trousers and threw him into Jackson Place to "cool his heels" before the officers of the law arrived.

George Bartlett's Windham High School "Minstrels" gave their annual concert in the auditorium. It was highly successful. The packed house were delighted with the quality of the student's singing. They performed such such popular ditties as, "Down Honolulu Way," and "Yaka Hula Hickey Dula." Thunderous applause greeted Fannie Kenyon's

version of "He May Be Old But He's Got Young Ideas," and Flora Baker's rendition of "What Do You Want To Make Those Eyes At Me For When They Don't Mean What They Say" brought the house down! The crowd then retired to the gymnasium for an evening of dancing.

1942

Howard Maine was a prominent mason, a pillar of the community. He was born in Willimantic in 1885. After graduating High School in 1904, Maine was employed by the Windham National Bank as a clerk. In 1930 he was promoted to assistant cashier, and remained in that position for twelve years. The community was stunned to hear that Maine had committed suicide in his automobile by attaching a hose to the car's exhaust. His body was discovered in the woods off the Scotland - Hanover road after Federal bank examiners working at the Windham National Bank, had discovered a \$4 ,500 shortage in their accounts. Tragedy haunted the family. Maine's parents had met with accidental deaths. His mother was killed by a tidal wave at Misquamicut, R.I. during the 1938 hurricane, and his father was killed shortly afterwards in a saw mill accident in Vermont.

The UConn Huskies wound up their home season with a sparkling 66 - 44 victory over Wesleyan at the Hawley Armory. It was a sad occasion as four seniors were playing their last game in front of their home crowd. Nevertheless, the retiring players went out with some flare. Winzler played an excellent defensive game as, Jasilka, Verbillo and Mugavero scored 30 pts between them. An expected win in their final game at Northeastern the following Saturday would give them second place and a 6 - 2 record in the Conference.

Eight UConn students celebrated the Huskies win over Wesleyan by painting Willimantic red! They emerged, singing and shouting, from a Union Street restaurant just after midnight, They kicked over trash cans in the street and tossed a lighted match into a garbage container situated on the corner of Main and North streets, causing a fire which had to be extinguished by the local fire company. The eight "basketball hooligans" aged between 19 and 22, were arraigned on charges of breach of the peace, and cooled their heels overnight in the city jail. Their parents and guardians arrived the following morning to bail them out.

1967

The Rogers Corporation announced a 50% expansion of their Willimantic plant, to keep up with increased orders and to facilitate the manufacture of a new product - "Mektherm" printed circuit heaters. The expansion created a number of technical and hourly paid jobs, adding to the 150 currently employed. The new construction would add an extra floor for offices and create 40,000 square feet of laboratory and manufacturing space. The plant had began production on this site in 1947. The company were well established, thanks to the high quality of its specially molded rubber

products, which included carburetors and gas tank floats for the automotive industry.

Ground was broken on by Route 32 in Mansfield for a building to house 24 new Lucky Strike bowling lanes, exactly 2 miles west of the old Lucky Strike lanes on Main Street, Willimantic. The new complex was to be served by a 170 car parking lot. The 140 foot square building would be constructed from concrete blocks laced with steel beams, and be situated some 150 feet from the road. The plans called for the front of the building to be trimmed with glass and field stone. It was intended to complete construction by June 1. The grand opening was planned for the first week in August.

The UConn Huskies clinched the Yankee Conference title, and a NCAA berth, with a resounding 114 - 75 victory over New Hampshire in front of a 4,400 sellout crowd at the Field House on the Storrs campus. The "Poughkeepsie Popper", Wes Bialosuknia, scored 42 points taking his season average to 33. 6 pts per game, and his season total to 1564 pts.