

History

ATCO's finest: the Chasses and Edmund Peltier

Part three of three

Commencing in February 1955, the American Thread Co. launched an advertising campaign entitled "The People Behind the Products." Over a two-year period, Willimantic's major employer ran an occasional full-page feature in the monthly magazine, Connecticut Industry.

It featured individuals and families employed at American Thread's Willimantic mills, under the byline, "Probably the most important factor in the quality of any product is the people who make it.

"This series is designed to let you meet some of the citizens of Willimantic who have been asked to help make the thread and yarn products which are considered among the finest made anywhere in the world."

Almost half a century later, the series provides an interesting social and industrial history of the city.

In the last two weeks, the Colorado, Augur, Hooper, Turcotte, Oldershaw and Johnson families



Roland and Fleurette Chasse of Willimantic, as pictured in the November 1956 issue of Connecticut Industry.

have appeared as representative ATCO employees in the mid 1950s. The series concludes with Edmund P. Peltier and Mr. and Mrs. Roland Chasse, ATCO employees featured in Connecticut Industry in 1956.

Edmund Peltier, 51, worked as a thread carrier and distributor in ATCO's shuttle bobbin department, where he supplied winding

tubes and other materials to the winding machine operators. Peltier's father, also Edmund, had worked at ATCO as a spinner in the cotton spinning department between 1919 and 1925.

Edmund P. Peltier was also an auxiliary policeman with the Willimantic Police Department, a job he had held since 1950. During the war he was a city air raid

warden for four years.

Photographs included Peltier at work at ATCO and as a policeman. He is also shown with his nephews, Rickie and Mickie at his home, 920 Rear Main St.

The advertising feature also included "Did You Know" facts. Peltier's story was accompanied by the fact that American Thread employees put almost \$6 million in circulation at Willimantic and surrounding communities.

"The payroll at the company's Willimantic plant is almost 25 percent of all wages paid in the community during 1955."

Roland and Fleurette Chasse worked for American Thread as a dresser tender and a winder. Roland ran the machinery that gave a glazed finish to sewing thread from a wax solution, dried by heat. Fleurette worked as a winder in the shoe thread twisting department.

In his spare time, Roland worked as a short-order cook and chef at parties and wedding receptions.

Both Roland and Fleurette had worked in Willimantic restau-

rants before joining American Thread, and from 1928 until 1933 Roland was a member of Company C Infantry of the Connecticut National Guard based at Willimantic.

The Chasses were also blood donors who had already donated more than 6 gallons of blood through the Red Cross.

They lived at 18 Ash St., and had two children, Robert and Evelyn. Roland's brothers, Lionel and Anthony, and his sister-in-law, Lorette, also worked for American Thread.

Accompanying the Chasse story was a "Did You Know" fact claiming that Willimantic's ATCO plant had 1,213,000 square feet of floor space, which made it the largest mill in the United States for the manufacture of thread. The area was equal to eight baseball diamonds the size of Yankee Stadium, or seven football fields.

If you're interested in copies of any of the 32 photographs that accompanied the 1955-56 Connecticut industry series, e-mail me at www.tom@threadcity.com or phone 450-1604.

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