

## Fun Facts

### *Interesting Facts About Willimantic, Connecticut*

#### Thread City Top Ten List

1. The Willimantic River drops about ninety feet as it runs through the town making it an ideal location to build water-powered factories and, hence, a city was built.
2. The Willimantic Thread Company owned the first mill in the world built to have electric lights. The lighting was designed by Thomas Edison, and it was the largest single story factory in the world in 1880.
3. The Willimantic Thread Company "invented" the coffee break. In the 1880's, the management experimented with giving snack breaks to increase the amount of labor the workers could perform.
4. In 1878, the Willimantic Thread Company built a library for the community with the goal of providing English classes, night school and other cultural opportunities for the immigrant workers.
5. Many famous people such as Lou Gehrig, President Teddy Roosevelt, Vivian Leigh, Sir Lawrence Olivier, William Howard Taft, Charlie Chaplin, Rudyard Kipling and Julian Alden Weir, have visited or passed through Willimantic. How many of these people can you identify?
6. The Stephen Fitch farmhouse, built in the 1700's, was moved to the green in Old Sturbridge Village in 1954.
7. The Willimantic Foot Bridge, "Frog Bridge" and two 19<sup>th</sup> century stone arch bridges are unique and wonderful to see and to walk over.
8. Willimantic has a community family owned newspaper and radio station, a hospital, an airport, a state university and a community college.
9. Willimantic has several special events to celebrate our diverse history and community including: Poetry Festival (April), Third Thursday Street Festivals (May through October), Victorian Home Tour (June) and our world famous Fourth of July Boom Box People's Parade.
10. Thread produced in Willimantic can be found in hundreds of products such as baseballs, tea bags, fire hoses, shoelaces, tents, automobile seats, carpets and seatbelts.

