

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2015

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All events are subject to change. Please call or visit our website for updates www.wpthistory.org.

HOW WESTPORT BECAME A TOWN, PRESENTED BY TONY CONNORS

Thursday, May 21, 7pm

Westport Public Library, 408 Old County Road, Westport
Tony Connors, President of the Westport Historical Society, delves into the early history of Westport and looks at how and why the residents of this area petitioned to separate from Dartmouth in 1787. The political and social issues of the day may sound familiar—taxes, boundaries, poor relief, highways, town officers, obscure elected positions, and education. Join us and learn more about a town official called a culler of fish and the important role of the “searcher and packer of pickled pork and beef.” Suggested donation \$5. (Please note Preserving Westport’s Cemeteries May 21 has been postponed.)

RIVER DAY

Saturday, June 6, 10am-3pm

(organized by the Westport River Watershed Alliance)
Head of Westport Town Landing

Join us on a walking tour of the Head of Westport. This tour departs from the Bell School at 10am. Suggested donation \$5.

HABITATS POP-UP MUSEUM

Ongoing throughout River Day

Help us create our first Pop-Up Museum! The theme is “Habitats” Bring along an object, photo, painting or recollection to share. Think about bringing objects that relate to the river, animals, plants, Native American artifacts and the special character of Westport. A pop-up museum is a temporary exhibit created by the participants. Conversation and sharing of stories is encouraged! This is YOUR opportunity to display an artifact that you created or own. All objects are returned to you at the end of the event.



THE ADVENTURES OF A WESTPORT FARMER WHO GOES WHALING IN 1837, PRESENTED BY RICHARD DONNELLY

Thursday, June 18, 7pm

Westport Public Library, 408 Old County Road, Westport

What was it like to live in Westport in the early 19th century? Why did young Westporters go a-whaling? A recently discovered journal provides a unique look into the life of Westport residents during the 1830s. Richard Donnelly will recount the story of Frederick Allen of Westport, MA, derived from daily entries Allen made in a journal from June 5, 1833, to March 1, 1838. From March through August 1835, the Allen family built a home to replace their original 1709 homestead. In 2014, an initial search for the house found it missing and likely destroyed, but further research found it moved to a new location five miles from the original site. The final year of the journal describes Allen’s life on a whaling voyage on the brig Mexico out of Westport Point to hunt for sperm whales. Richard E. Donnelly retired from a 35-year career in advertising. He is presently an antiques dealer specializing in folk art, with special interest in 19th-century scrimshaw, whalecraft, and whaling journals and logbooks. Suggested donation \$5.

**AN OLD HOUSE PRIMER: A WORKSHOP ON THE
VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE OF THE SOUTHCOAST
LED BY ERIC GRADOIA**

Saturday, June 20, 1-4:30pm

At the Handy House 202 Hix Bridge Road, Westport

Architectural historian Eric Gradoia provides an overview of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early-nineteenth century domestic architecture of the Southcoast. A discussion of common house forms, building plans, and architectural details unique to each period will be explored. The evolution of the common domestic residence will be examined with respect to changes in architectural trends, advances in construction technology, and the role social customs played in the arrangement of one's home. A tour of the Handy house will illustrate key points and concepts of the talk. Eric Gradoia's familiarity with historic buildings grows out of over twenty years of involvement in studying and documenting cultural resources throughout the country. In addition to independent consulting, Eric Gradoia is an Architectural Historian with the Albany firm of Mesick, Cohen, Wilson, Baker Architects and an adjunct faculty member in the Historic Preservation Program at Roger Williams University. Pre-registration required. \$20 for Westport Historical Society members, \$30 for non-members. Refreshments will be provided. Space is limited!

TOUR OF THE CLIFFORD ASHLEY HOUSE

Tuesday, July 21, 2pm

1838 Drift Road, Westport

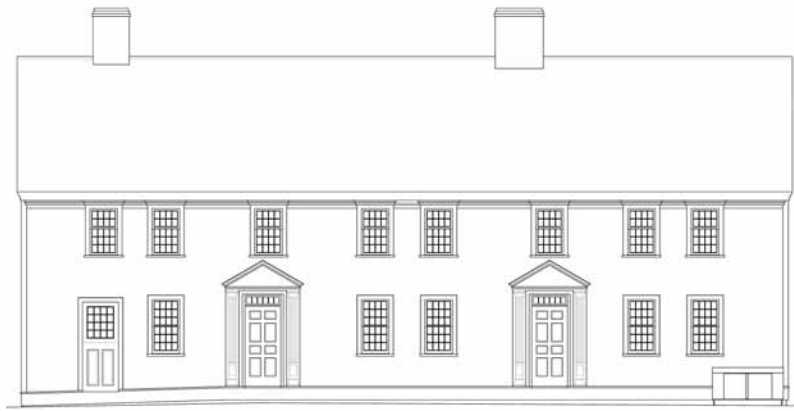
Pre-registration required, space is limited for this tour. \$15 per person, Westport Historical Society members only! A rare opportunity to tour a remarkable house, occupied by Clifford Ashley, a famous marine painter, and early advocate of preservation and restoration. This house has a fascinating story and many inventive and unusual additions.

TELLING STORIES, PRESENTED BY DAVISON PAULL

Thursday, July 23, 7pm

Westport Grange, 931 Main Road, Westport

Oral histories are a unique tool for studying local history. Davison Paull discusses his project that brought together a collection of personal recollections about Westport intended to provide a window into what life in town was like in the past. His grandfather, Richard Paull, was an avid amateur historian who devoted much of his life to exploring the past of the town he adopted as his own at a young age. His tales are at the heart of this work. Davison also conducted interviews with many Westporters over more than a decade, and delved into an extensive archive of interviews from 1975-6 as part of Westport's observance of America's Bicentennial. Suggested donation \$5.

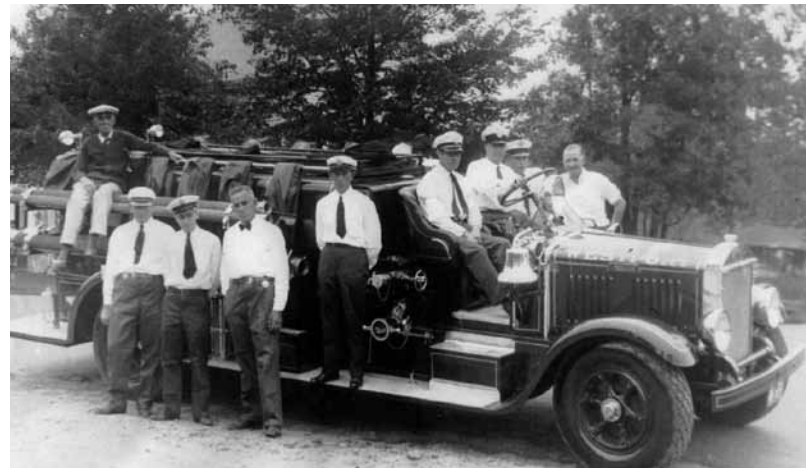


HURRICANE POP-UP MUSEUM

Wednesday, August 12, 12 noon-4pm

Horseneck Point Lifesaving Station, 139 East Beach Road

Hurricanes have dramatically altered the coastlines of this region. What was East Beach like before the Hurricane of 1938? What happened during and after the hurricanes of 1944 and 1954? The Westport Historical Society and Westport Fishermen's Association will share images and artifacts from their collections. You are also invited to bring along an object, photo, or recollection to share. A pop-up museum is a temporary exhibit created by the participants. Conversation and sharing of stories is encouraged! All objects are returned to you at the end of the event. Co-sponsored by the Westport Fishermen's Association.



**DOCUMENTING THE HISTORY OF THE WESTPORT
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Thursday, August 20, 7pm

Westport Fire Station, 54 Hix Bridge Road, Westport

Deputy Chief Sam Manley, Cukie Macomber and others associated with the department will reflect on the development of the department. The general public is invited to share their own stories and memories to assist with the ongoing documentation of the history of the fire department. Photos, artifacts and memorabilia from the Fire Department's historical collection will be on display. Suggested donation: \$5.

RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF YOUR HISTORIC HOUSE WORKSHOP

Saturday, August 22, 10am-1pm

Handy House, 202 Hix Bridge Road

Do you want to know how to go about researching the history of your old house? Two experts in local house history, Betty Slade and Geraldine Millham, will be on hand to help you get started. 10-11am: House research orientation. 11-1pm: Betty Slade and Geraldine Millham will be available to help answer questions, and to assist with your research. Suggested donation \$5.

FARMSTEAD FEAST

Saturday, September 5

Sampson Farm, 222 Old Bedford Road

A fundraiser celebrating Westport's agricultural history. Please check our website for event details.



POINT BRIDGE AND ROUTE 88

Wednesday, September 16, 7pm

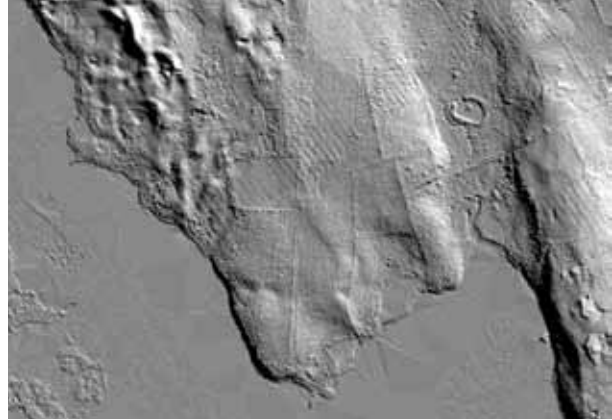
Westport Grange 931 Main Road, Westport

Noted Westport author Dawn Tripp leads a discussion of about the history of the Point Bridge and the construction of Route 88 and the changes that these new and broken connections brought to Westport.

HANDY HOUSE ARTISAN FAIR

Saturday, September 26, 10pm-3pm

A gathering of over 20 local and regional artisans whose work reflects the traditional skills that were a part of 18th and 19th century life. This is a unique opportunity to connect with local artisans, to purchase handmade crafts and to tour the historic Handy House. Free. (Rain date Sunday, September 27)



REDISCOVERING THE LOST ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND, PRESENTED BY KATE JOHNSON

Saturday, October 3, 1pm

(Venue TBA)

What secrets lie beneath the forested landscape of Westport? Kate Johnson will discuss the exciting new uses of LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) to reveal everything from stonewalls, homesteads and roads that were previously undocumented. The results of her "ground-breaking" research will be a remarkable contribution to the understanding of how humans and environment interact and will help to tell the story of the process of abandonment of many historic farmsteads in this area. Currently a geography Ph.D. student at the University of Connecticut, Kate Johnson was among the first to use LIDAR to explore land use patterns. Her research has attracted attention at a national level, from media such as NPR, National Geographic and Science and Archaeology magazines. She has close connections, both personal and scholarly, to this area, having worked on the Waite-Kirby-Potter site in Westport and the Wilbor House in Little Compton. Suggested donation \$5 (Co-sponsored by the Westport Land Conservation Trust).

ANNUAL MEETING SLAVERY IN WESTPORT: FIVE SKETCHES PRESENTED BY TONY CONNORS

Thursday, October 15, 6:30pm

Westport Grange, 931 Main Road, Westport

Tony Connors, President of the Westport Historical Society, explores the lives of five individuals who shed light on Westport's connections to slavery. One was a Westport slave owner. Two engaged in the slave trade. Another was a West Indian boy, indentured to a Westport family, who ran away to sea. And one tried to reverse the direction of slavery by transporting free American blacks to Africa. These five sketches show little-known aspects of slavery and the slave trade as they existed—right here in Westport—in the 18th and 19th centuries. Suggested donation \$5.

DR. HANDY'S SPOOKY SKELETON HUNT

Saturday, October 24, 10am-3pm

Handy House, 202 Hix Bridge Road

Little ghouls, ghosts and goblins are invited to converge at the Handy House to try out their sleuthing skills to find the whereabouts of a skeleton hidden inside the historic house on Hix Bridge Road. And make no bones about it, there will be plenty of snacks and prizes! Come in costume! Free.



ONGOING

HANDY HOUSE, 202 HIX BRIDGE ROAD

Open June-October, 10am-4pm

Ongoing second and fourth Saturdays of each month

Exhibition: Explore the special character of Westport and its enduring heritage through the paintings of Westport artist Blanche Paull (1890-1983) and historic photographs. Blanche Paull was a prolific self-taught landscape artist and enjoyed sketching old homes and historic buildings. She often could be seen painting a picture outside a house while her husband Dr. M. H. Paull called on a patient inside. A true Yankee, her art paper often had pictures painted on both sides and her frames were sometimes homemade. Today her paintings can be considered visual documents that capture an essence of Westport during the mid-20th century.



HANDS ON AT THE HANDY HOUSE: RECONSTRUCTING WESTPORT'S EARLIEST HOUSE

How were houses constructed in the 18th century? Traditional woodworker Gerry Vinci embarks upon the scaled down reconstruction of the Waite Potter House, one of the earliest houses built in Westport. You will have a chance to witness a post and beam framework come together over a period of several weekends. Stop by throughout the summer, grab a hammer or a hand plane to make a contribution to the building of the house. Ongoing each second and fourth Saturday June through October.



THE BELL SCHOOL

Open Wednesday-Friday, 10 am-2pm

25 Drift Road

View our exhibition Room to Learn: Westport's One Room Schoolhouses. Also open for researchers, please call ahead to make a research appointment.

WESTPORT SUMMER PASSPORT

A QUEST FOR FUN AND AWESOME PLACES

Embark on an adventure that will take you to some of the most beautiful and interesting spots in our town. Pick up your summer passport (available June-September) at Westport Historical Society or the Westport Land Conservation Trust office at the Town Farm.

WHAT'S A POP UP MUSEUM?

A Pop Up Museum is a temporary exhibit created by the people who show up to participate. It works by choosing a theme and venue and then inviting people to bring an object on-topic to share, like a community show-and-tell. Each participant writes a label for his or her object and puts it on display. A Pop Up Museum usually lasts for a few hours on one day, and focuses on bringing people together in conversation through stories, art, and objects. Look out for our Pop Up Museum at River Day (June 6) and at the Horseneck Point Life Saving Station (August 12)!

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