

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

# HARBINGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY [WWW.WPTHISTORY.ORG](http://WWW.WPTHISTORY.ORG)  
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Winter 2017, vol.50, no.1

Westport kindergarteners discover the story of the Macomber turnip.



WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE MANY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ALREADY DONATED TO OUR ANNUAL FUND.

If you have not yet decided to make a donation, we hope that we may be deserving of your support as we anticipate an exciting new year. Your overwhelmingly positive reaction to the many programs of the past year has been an inspiration as we plan for the year to come. This annual appeal is the foundation for the coming year, providing one third of our operating income. If you are a *previous donor*, please consider a move to a new gift level. If you are a *new donor*, please understand that your participation is critical to our success. *Donations can be made securely online via our website [www.wpthistory.org](http://www.wpthistory.org).*

We are constantly reassessing how to connect with our community and how to provide YOU, our supporters, with experiences that will forge new connections with people and places. What is it about history that stirs up our emotions? Whether feelings of sadness, joy, laughter or excitement? During the past year it has become clear that our mission extends far beyond simply preservation or formal education. Our greatest successes have been programs and events that help our community express and create an emotional connection to this incredibly special town.

## 2017 will bring some exciting initiatives:

- The construction of much needed visitor amenities at the Handy House such as restrooms and plentiful parking as well as trails in the woodland surrounding the Handy House.
- We will also delve into the deep and wide topic of the heritage of water, a theme that literally flows through our history. And of course, continue to offer unique programming such as the Artisan Fair, Westport Summer Passport, Backpack Adventures, and educational opportunities for the local schools.
- Later in 2017 you will also have an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the remarkable Paul Cuffe whose influence as an African-American, Native-American, Quaker, mariner, businessman, visionary extends far beyond the borders of Westport. In commemoration of the 200th anniversary of his death, in partnership with other neighboring



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THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A NEW EXHIBITION FOR 2017

## HEADWATERS TO HARBOR: THE HERITAGE OF WATER

Join us as we explore the heritage of water in Westport, and the influence that it has on our lives today and in the future. We will use the Handy House as a central venue for interpretation and as a gateway to a community-wide exploration from Headwaters to Harbor and beyond... We plan an exhibition, walks, talks, and other community events.

Water is a big topic for Westport, embracing the entire town from north to south. It encompasses topics as diverse as rum-running, slavery, whaling, hurricanes, ice industry, cranberry bogs and saltworks.

### BOARD MEMBERS

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### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jenny O'Neill

### MANAGER OF EDUCATION

Kathleen McAreavey

### BOOK KEEPER

Nancy Andersen

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Westport Historical Society is to engage the public in the exploration of the town's rich history and culture, to inspire a spirit of discovery through educational programs and encourage active participation in the preservation and interpretation of our past.

The Society collects and shares this history. Its goal is to foster the imaginative process of connecting to the past, making it relevant to our present and vital to the future of our community.

The *Harbinger* is published by the Westport Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) non profit organization.

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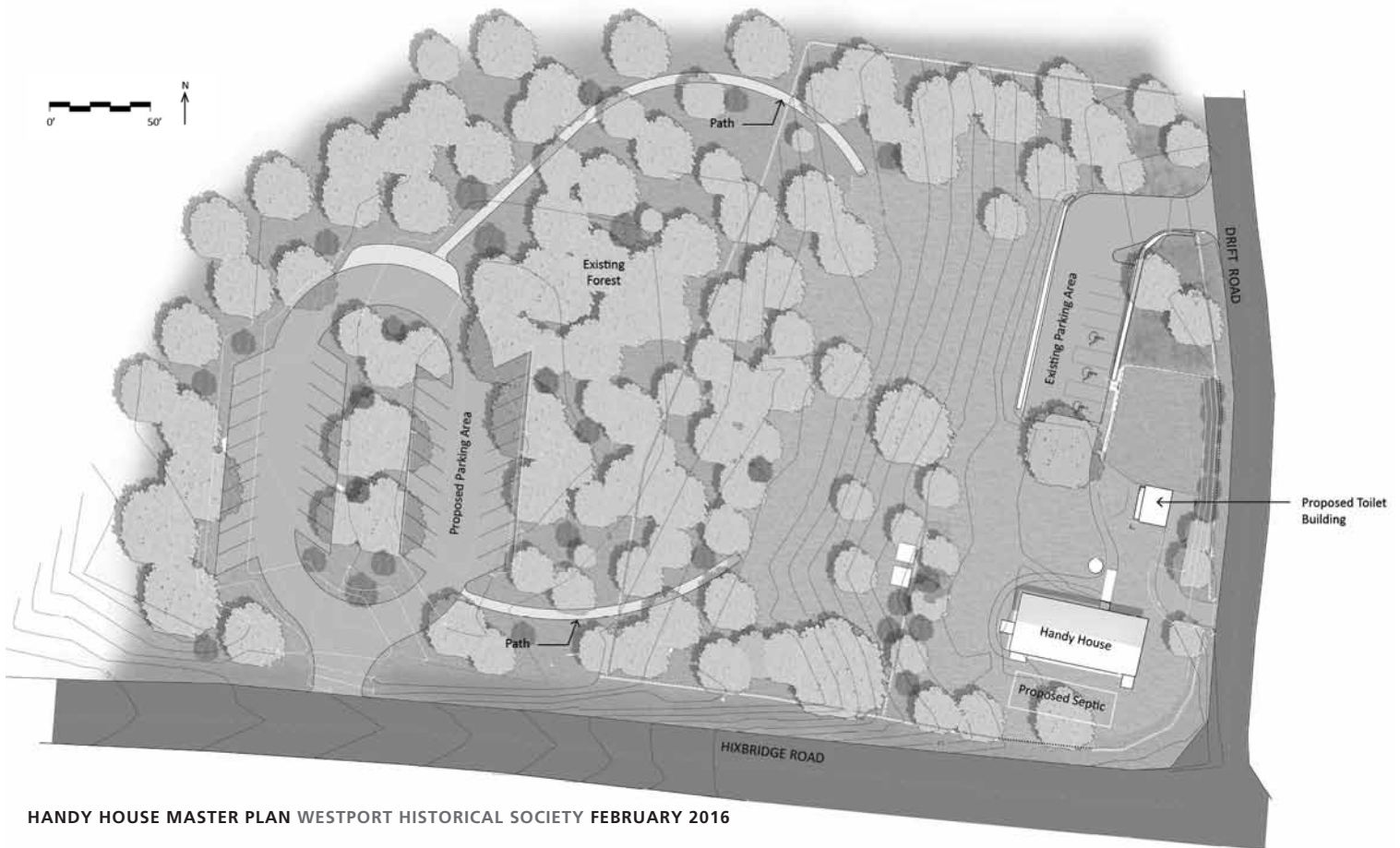
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Today, most of us experience water from a landlubber's perspective as a place of great natural beauty, or for pleasure seeking activities of sailing, kayaking, and recreational fishing. The maritime industries of the 19th century have now been replaced by 21st century forces of preservation and protection, balancing development, recreation, conservation, and environmental concerns.

How has living by the water influenced your life? For some it represents freedom, for others it has been a resource that provided food and employment, or a refuge for recreation and relaxation. We hope that YOUR ideas, artifacts, photographs, memories, and documents will help us tell the story of Westport and its heritage of water. For further information, contact Jenny O'Neill, Executive Director.





HANDY HOUSE MASTER PLAN WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY FEBRUARY 2016

## An improved visitor experience at the Handy House on track for 2017!

We are thrilled to announce the successful completion of a fundraising campaign to support the construction of restrooms, additional parking and trails at the Handy House property. The Historical Society received a challenge grant of \$75,000 from the Manton Foundation towards this project. We have successfully matched this grant with the generous support of many donors.

We realize the value of the Handy House property is a little more than its history and architecture—it can be a special place for the community to gather, celebrate and perpetuate its identity as demonstrated by the success of our annual events such as the Artisan Fair and Halloween.

The project includes the construction of a small building to house two handicapped accessible restrooms, a small utility room, a woodland parking area and trails, as well as a new septic system. On one level, these are purely functional amenities, fundamental to providing a comfortable and safe visitor experience. On another level, these are the tools with which the Handy House property can become a destination combining heritage, education, and community engagement. We look forward to seeing you at the Handy House in 2017!

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historical organizations, we will introduce new perspectives on his life and family.

### Our challenges for the coming year are the following:

- The ongoing care and management of our priceless collection.
- Providing programs that are free and accessible to everyone.
- The ongoing preservation of two treasured buildings, the Bell School and the Handy House.

Diversity of learning opportunities and programming are also key to our continued success. Given the packed community halls at our programs, the delighted reactions to our family activities, and excitement of school kids as they visit the Bell School and Handy House, we have demonstrated a great record of success reaching a diverse array of individuals. With your help, we look forward to crafting a year full of new opportunities to explore our local history!

*Thank you!*



(1)



(2)

# Recent acquisitions

The following are some highlights of recent acquisitions. We are very grateful to all who have entrusted us with these gifts:

## 2016.029 RONALD SELLECK

Photo albums and scrapbooks relating to the following families: Gifford, Manchester, Wordell, Sherman, Perry, and Brightman.

## 2016.033 ELIZABETH KUGLER

Shelving from the Cory Store.

## 2016.036 MICHELLE SOARES (1)

Photo album of the Milton Earle School 1972-1973.

In 1973 Rumpelstiltskin, a local chimpanzee, came to visit the Milton Earle School. He jumped from desk to desk, climbed up poles, tried to color and took a drink from a bubbler.

## 2016.038 HENRY AND SUSAN ASHWORTH (2)

Westport Harbor Aqueduct Company seal press 1891.

Water was not potable on the east shore of Cockeast Pond and south of Perch Rock. Original pipes were wooden, and were enclosed in plastic pipes in the 1950s. The water quality varied especially after the '38 Hurricane when salt contaminated the water supply. There were complaints of various solid items in the water, one individual insisted that they had found owl feathers in the water.

## 2016.039 PETER FENN

Books written by Edward Yeomans. History of Windmill House and Luther House at Westport Point.

## 2016.042 DOUGLAS AMARAL

Materials relating to the history of the North Westport First Christian Church.

## 2016.043 PAUL LIPSITT (3)

Camp Noquochoke bulletin and newspaper clippings, 1942.

## 2016.044 ELIZABETH FLEMMING, ROBERT

## AND PATRICIA SIEMINSKI (4)

Painting by Herb Hadfield, possibly of Gooseberry Neck.

## 2016.045 BOB WIDTFELDT (5)

Hi-Way Casino Menu

## 2016.046 TOM GANDER (6)

Book: Artists in Living, Anne and Vibe Spicer.

Expand your local history horizons!

Explore Westport's history @ our Website

Share memories and knowledge @ our Facebook page

Connect with our collections @ our collections database

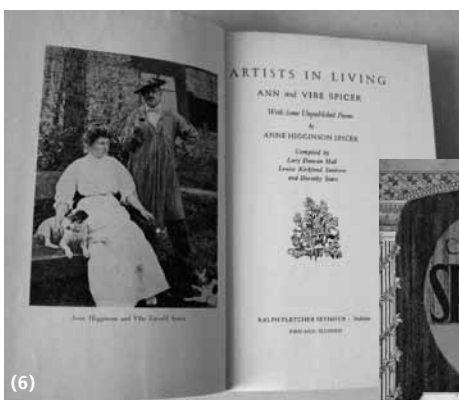
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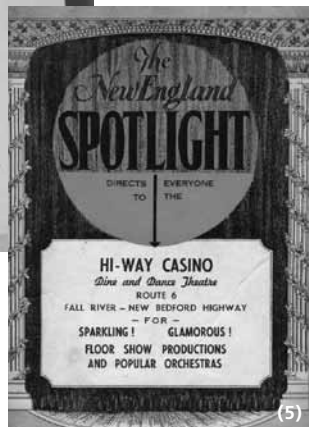
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## EDUCATION NEWS

This fall, Westport Historical Society Manager of Education Programs Kathleen McAreavey and school volunteer Sarah Gifford taught all of the Kindergarten classes at the Macomber Primary School about the Macomber Turnip! Sarah read an old Russian folktale to the students and Kathleen talked about the history behind this singular vegetable. Then, students re-enacted a scene from the story that talks about the teamwork, cooperation, and kindness used when the characters in the story were harvesting an enormous turnip. The experience was as much fun as it was educational since knowing our vegetables is a key topic of learning for Kindergarten students and Westport history, both past and present.

Special thanks to all of the Kindergarten teachers for accommodating the visitors to their classroom, the students for being so sweet, Principal Carolyn Pontes for being so enthusiastic about our Children's Heritage Education Program, and Marion and Paul Manchester of Diamond Acre Farm on Horseneck Road for donating a beautiful, leafy Macomber Turnip each week!



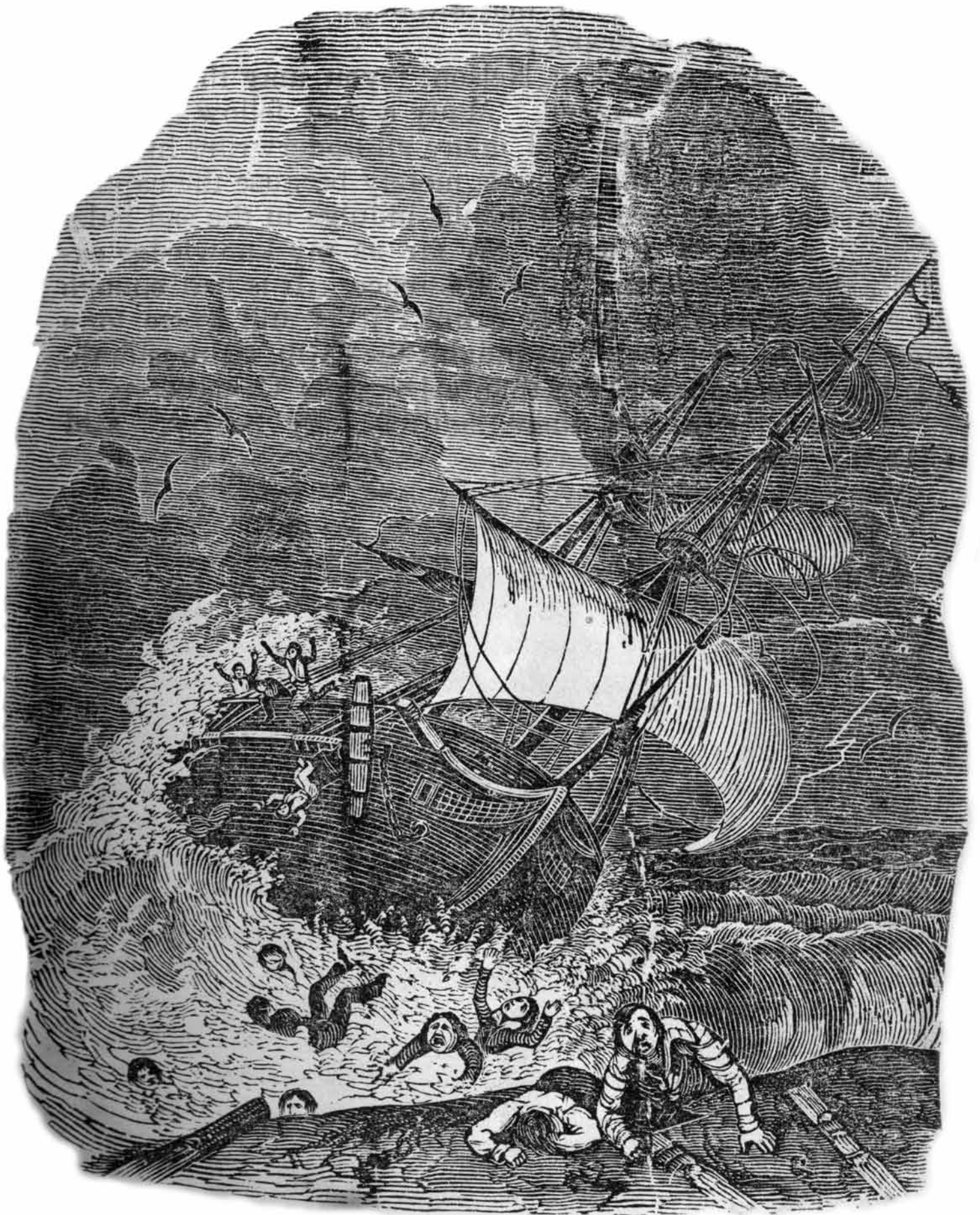
## spooked!

**A special "Thank You" to all the volunteers who helped out with our Halloween event this October.**

350 kids and parents gathered at the Handy House to enjoy the Westport Historical Society's Halloween program "Dr. Handy and the Wonderfully Wicked Witches." This free Halloween program at the historic Handy House offered children and their families a chance to enjoy the season with a little spookiness and a lot of fun. Designed around a witch theme, activities were based on traditional beliefs and creative practices employed to ward off evil spirits and keep

witches at bay. Kids created their own protective spells and potions and met the Handy House witches. Jenny O'Neill, executive director of the Westport Historical Society, commented "The turn out this year is astounding. It is just wonderful to see the Handy House a-buzz with activity. This is an experience that the kids will remember for a long time and hopefully they will all return next year!" The Handy House closed for the season at the end of October and will reopen in 2017.







# STOVE BOATS, SHIPWRECKS, AND CANNIBALISM: THE PERILS OF WESTPORT WHALING VOYAGES

Whaling was a dangerous business. On long voyages so many things could go wrong. Men got sick far from land. They fell overboard. Boats were stove by whales. Ships were wrecked, or simply never heard from again. And sometimes, men went to great extremes to survive. The following stories are all true, and all happened to Westport people or ships.

Westport was an active whaling port for about 75 years. Whaling began in earnest about 1803, and the last whaler, the *Andrew Hicks*, left Westport in 1879. If we rank all 72 U. S. ports engaged in whaling by number of voyages, Westport ranks 8th—a very respectable position for a small harbor.

In the early days of whaling in Westport, voyages typically lasted only six months. This limited the exposure to danger, and allowed crew members to have some semblance of home life. But as the whaling industry expanded, and whales became more scarce in the Atlantic, voyages increased, with two to three years a common duration. The longest Westport voyage was on the *Greyhound* which went out in 1857 and returned four and a half years later. Imagine how hard it would be to hold an engagement, or not to see a child born just after departure until the child was four years old. More relevant to our story, the longer a ship was at sea, the more likelihood of something going wrong. And things did go wrong—some ended well, some badly.

Under the best of circumstances, whaling was perilous, and the most dangerous moments were when whaling boats were lowered to approach a whale. A whale boat was typically 30 feet long—half the length of an average sperm whale, which might weigh 40 tons. And the whale, just

speared with a harpoon, would be very angry. Here are three very different accounts of close encounters with whales.

Henry Pettey, writing to his sister Nancy from the Azores in 1854:

“I got baptized handsome in the following manner without ceremony. We raised whales and lowered away and the boat that I was in soon got fast and as soon as Tripp struck the whale he struck our boat and stove her and then by way of proving his regard for us beyond a doubt he gave us a parting kiss with his flukes that demolished our boat entirely and spilled us in the drink ...being in some degree amphibious we managed to keep bung up and bilge free till the nearest boat which was about a mile off came and picked us up.”

Note how Henry makes light of his near-death experience. This is very much in line with mariners’ behavior that Richard Henry Dana described in *Two Years Before the Mast*: if a sailor survived an accident, such as falling overboard or dropping from the rigging, everyone treated it as a joke—despite the fact that at the time, the terrified sailor thought he was going to die. Note also that the boat that would rescue Henry was a mile off—a far distance considering that most whalemen could not swim!

A very different point of view comes from an unnamed sailor who honestly recalled his first voyage on the Westport whaler *Leonidas* in 1857:

“I remember seeing a black shape beside the boat and a great commotion in the water.... One man was frightened and panic-stricken and the mate had to attend to him,... or he might have gone over-board. A Kanaka [South Sea Islander] said to him ‘You look at me.

Me no ‘fraid. You see this little feller. He no ‘fraid.’ That was myself and it almost made me smile. I thought ‘If you only knew how I felt you wouldn’t say ‘This little feller no ‘fraid.’ But I attended to my work and did not look at the whale if I could help it.”

Finally, in the log kept by Albert Gifford aboard the Westport ship *President* in 1849, we have a very terse description of a deadly encounter with a whale.

“lored [lowered] wast [waist] boat Struck starboard boat went on to him [whale] got stove whale took one Ansel Juel in his Jaw never saw him after”

Sickness was a constant worry aboard ship, especially contagious diseases where quarantine was difficult. An example is an 1851 voyage of the *Cornelia*, under the command of Captain Edward Davoll of Westport. Ten days out to sea, Davoll discovered that a passenger he was carrying to the Azores had smallpox. Soon Davoll himself became ill, and at one point 11 crew members were sick at the same time. They were lucky—all survived.

Another tale of sickness comes from Captain William Bearns of the bark *Hero*, built in Westport by Paul Cuffe, and co-owned by Cuffe and Isaac Cory of Westport Point. The captain wrote to the owners in June 1812 from Chile:

“I was 73 days in North Latitude and my men getting very Bad with the Scurvy. When I reached this Port, there was but Four men that could come on deck... and they was sick.”

“I had been confined to my Cabin 12 days before I got to this Port.... I got the Sick men all in the boat, one died getting him in the boat, which was a

Spanish man. I carried all on shore & sent off 18 men to tow the Bark. The Spaniards [authorities of Chile] kept us all out of Doors one Day & one Night in the fog and cold which was very bad for us. Isaac Harte departed this life in four hours after he got on Shore, but the Rest have got well & I am much better."

The captain writes that the bark was "very rotten" and had to be condemned. "It is very hurtful to my eye to Write or I Should Write more particulars," he adds. "I cannot see with one eye & the other is very weak & in much Pain in my eye and temple." Scurvy, death far from home, a condemned ship, blindness—this is a letter of unrelenting bad news.

While not exactly sickness, a medical issue that occasionally arose was the pregnancy of a captain's wife at sea. Westport native Abbie Dexter Hicks accompanied her husband Edward on the bark *Mermaid* which sailed in 1873 and was gone for two and a half years. As she approached her delivery date they rented at house in the Seychelle Islands, about 1,000 miles east of Kenya. When the baby was born, her husband was out to sea. Her diary entry for that day was:

Baby born about 12—caught two rats.

This was not a disaster, but hardly ideal conditions for childbirth!

When sailors died at sea, there was usually a sea burial, unless they were close to land. One Westport whaler, Charles H. Petty of the bark *A. R. Tucker*, was attacked by a shark in 1863 and buried on the coast of Africa. This may seem preferable to burial at sea, but it was terrible for the parents who could not properly bury their son. He was just

a boy, only 15 when he went to sea, and dead at 17.

Another peril was war. Westport's most famous whaler, the *Kate Cory*, sailed during the Civil War. In 1863, off the coast of Brazil, she was captured by the Confederate commerce raider *Alabama*, which had been built in England. The crew were removed and the ship burned. The men eventually made it back, but there were no profits to share—until 1870 when the US government won an international law case for \$15 million against Great Britain for having broken its neutrality agreement.

While war was a bad time to be at sea (the *Kate Cory* was one of over 60 vessels taken by the *Alabama*) in fact during the Civil War it was safer to be at sea than in the army.

In the days before radio, radar, and GPS, ships could more easily run aground or get caught in bad weather. One example of a Westport shipwreck is the *Catherwood*, as told in the *Boston Daily Courier*, February 19, 1856.

Whaling bark *Catherwood* of Westport was totally lost on the Island of Narbio, one of the Galapagos group. Capt. Oliver states that she went ashore about 1am in thick fog and dead calm. They commenced towing the vessel offshore but the swell was so heavy that in less than half an hour she struck and immediately went to pieces and they were compelled to abandon her, saving only the ship's papers, the crew were obliged to leave without water or provisions, they were 5 days without food, subsisting only upon crabs. The only thing saved from the wreck was a cask of bread. The *Catherwood* had on

board when lost 500 bbls sperm oil.

Fortunately the men were rescued by a passing ship.

In March 1860, the bark *United States*, owned by Westport whaling agent Andrew Hicks, under the command of Captain Warren Woodward, left St Helena in the south Atlantic Ocean. Four weeks later, about 800 miles from New Bedford she began taking on water in heavy seas. For the next three weeks the men pumped every day, just barely keeping up with the severe leak. By April 28 a hurricane was blowing. There were eight passengers on board, John Bagley, his wife, and six children, who were moving from St. Helena to New Bedford.

On May 1, as the captain later reported, they "lost the rudder and the ship became unmanageable, rolling heavily and the leak increasing." Fortunately, a ship, the *Moses Wheeler* of New York, saw their distress signal, and despite heavy seas, they got the passengers to the ship. Captain Woodward then called all hands and asked who would stay with the *United States*. No one volunteered! and the ship was abandoned. The crew and passengers lost all their belongings. Also lost were 550 barrels of sperm oil, worth over \$20,000. This was a happy ending, but a big financial and personal loss, and a scary beginning to the Bagley family's new life in Massachusetts.

In these two cases, the ships were lost but the crew returned safely. Sometimes ships returned but lost crew members. This was the fate of Captain William Cuffe, the son of Westport's esteemed mariner, philanthropist, and civil rights advocate Paul Cuffe. William and three of his crew aboard the *Rising States* died



when the ship was badly damaged in a gale in 1837. Other ships simply disappeared with no news, such as the *Theophilus Chase* in 1849. This had a devastating effect on families: holding out hope for months, and never knowing what happened.

The *Whalemen's Shipping List*, the New Bedford newspaper of the whaling industry, gave a bleak assessment of death and destruction at sea in 1855: 336 wrecks and 480 lives lost or missing. And the previous year had been much worse! The editors noted that it will be "a heart-sickening duty to perform" the next years report. "Almost every mail brings additions to the disastrous catalogue."

Finally, there is the strange and rather grim story of the *Janet*, under the command of Captain Charles B. Hosmer, and owned by Henry Wilcox of Westport. In 1849, on a whaling voyage to the Pacific Ocean, over 1,000 miles from the nearest land, whales were spotted and three boats were lowered, commanded by the captain, the first mate and the second mate. What happened next depends on which account is closest to the truth.

According to a seaman who survived the ordeal, the second mate's boat was destroyed in the jaws of a sperm whale. The boat's crew were all saved and brought into the other two boats. The captain's boat then went after the whale, while the mate's boat returned to the *Janet*. After capturing the whale, Captain Hosmer looked up to see the *Janet* sailing away. They rowed all night in the direction of the ship, but at dawn it was nowhere in sight. After three days with no food, a "Malay" (apparently from Malaysia) suggested they draw lots to see who should be killed to provide food for the

others. (The captain was excepted—he was the only navigator.) The victim was hit on the head, and devoured by his shipmates.

Every few days this pattern repeated, until four crew members were dead. The fifth victim was the Malay who had become violent and was killed by the captain. When a sixth man died of exhaustion, his body was used (unsuccessfully) to troll for sharks. After 36 days with no rain and no fish they were spotted by a passing ship, and the four remaining men were saved.

The captain told a very different story. In his version the mate's whaleboat was not destroyed by a whale; in fact all three boats got whales and two made it back to the *Janet*. The captain's boat capsized when it was only a mile and a half from the ship. The *Janet*, under the command of the first mate, sailed away. While bailing the boat, one man was lost, and another died the next day (Hosmer didn't explain how). The captain headed for Cocos Island, about 1,000 miles distant.

On the seventh day, they decided to draw lots, but there is no description of the victim's death. The following day a fourth man died of exhaustion, leaving only the captain and a seaman. But in this story there is some fresh water from rain and food in the form of a dolphin that lands in the boat. A final difference is that the boat makes it to Cocos Island which, though uninhabited, has pigs and fresh water. Two days later the New Bedford whaler *Leonidas* stops at the island for wood and water, and the two survivors are rescued.

Both versions imply that the first mate intentionally sailed away from the

captain's whaleboat. The mate wrote to owner Henry Wilcox that after bringing his whale to the ship, he sailed to the second mate's boat and brought the crew in. He then sailed for three days in search of the captain's boat before leaving the area.

So which is the true story? Was one of the whaleboats stove by a whale? Did they capture fresh water from rain and a dolphin for food? Did they make it to Cocos Island before being rescued? How many men were killed? Did they use a body to try to catch a shark? These are important details, with no agreement. All we know is that there was cannibalism among the crew of the *Janet*. But how that actually happened we'll never know.

Westport is still a maritime port, and going to sea is dangerous. The mariners' memorial at Westport Point attests to the perilous life of mariners. But today's fishermen do not stay out for four years or chase after 40-ton leviathans, which is good for the families of Westport—and for the whales.

**Tony Connors, President of the Westport Historical Society**

**You can read the complete firsthand accounts of the *Janet* disaster by visiting our website: [wpthistory.org/category/westport-whaling/whaling-disasters/](http://wpthistory.org/category/westport-whaling/whaling-disasters/)**



# VOLUNTEER SOME TIME TO HISTORY

Winter is long in New England! We have many short-term volunteer opportunities to keep you busy.

No long-term commitment required! Some of these projects can be completed in the comfort of your own home.

Contact us if you would like to learn more about any of the following opportunities:

## **WRITERS AND STORY TELLERS**

Our collection contains some fascinating objects with interesting stories to tell. We need volunteers to help research local history topics and write short articles for our website, newsletter and press.

## **TYPISTS**

We often need to transcribe interesting documents in our collection and we require a speedy and accurate typist to assist us. Commitment: 2 -3 hours/week. This work can be done in the comfort of your own home and according to your own schedule. Volunteer must have access to a computer.

## **CATALOGUERS**

Computer savvy volunteer to assist with cataloging projects. This is an opportunity to work with some interesting documents and other collections. Must be familiar

with scanning, comfortable with simple data entry methods and an accurate typist. Must have some experience working in library or archive. Training will be provided. Regular Commitment: 2 hours per week. Volunteer must be able to work at the Bell School house during a 9am to 5pm weekday schedule.

## **CHILDREN'S HERITAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Docents in the Westport Historical Society Children's Heritage Education Program are trained volunteers who share their interest and love of Westport history with schoolchildren. We focus primarily on 3rd grade students, but, also work with grades K-12.

## **HANDY HOUSE DOCENTS**

Anyone interested in local history and meeting new people should consider becoming a docent for the Handy House.

Docent training takes place in May. We offer a flexible schedule but as a general rule of thumb volunteers must be able to commit to volunteering for 3 hours on one Saturday per month July through October.

## **POP UP MUSEUM TEAM**

A pop-up museum is a temporary exhibit created by the participants. Conversation and sharing of stories is encouraged! Volunteers needed to help set up and facilitate these events.

## **ARTISAN FAIR**

This event takes place on September 30. We are looking for volunteers to help on the day of the event with setting up tents, tables, manning WHS table, helping with parking. 2 hours shifts throughout the day.





#### **HALLOWEEN AT THE HANDY HOUSE**

Scheduled for the fourth Saturday in October. This is one of our most popular events at the Handy House. We are looking for creative people to help decorate the house and grounds. Must have some availability September through October.

#### **LECTURES**

Assist with set up, clean up after the lecture, filming, greet and help sign in attendees. Volunteer must be available some evenings.

#### **MAILINGS**

Volunteers needed to help with mailings, stuffing envelopes and applying address labels. Commitment: 2-3 hours, once a month, volunteer must be able to work at the Bell Schoolhouse during a 9am to 5pm weekday schedule.

#### **LEES MARKET RECEIPTS**

Volunteers needed to help add up and prepare Lees Market receipts. Lees Market will donate 1% of the total receipts to the Westport Historical Society. Commitment: 2-3 hours each month. This work can be done in the comfort of your own home and according to your own schedule.



Don't forget to save your Lees Market receipts and bring them to the Westport Historical Society. Lees Market generously donates 1% of the total receipt value. You can drop them off at the Bell School or bring them to a historical society program.

## *Support* **LOCAL HISTORY!**

The Westport Historical Society is supported by donations from individuals, foundations and businesses who care about preserving the special heritage of Westport. In addition to joining the Historical Society as a member, please consider these other ways you can support our mission:

#### **CONTRIBUTIONS IN HONOR OR MEMORIAL GIFTS**

Honor a friend or relative, commemorate a special anniversary or mark the passing of a loved one with a contribution.

#### **BEQUESTS**

Leave a lasting legacy for the future by naming the Historical Society as a beneficiary in your will.

#### **CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS**

Please check with your employer to see if they offer a matching gift program.

#### **BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS**

The Historical Society offers local businesses many different levels of sponsorship and recognition.

## *Thank you* **TO OUR BUSINESSES MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT:**

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## WINTER HISTORY FORUM

### A WESTPORT WHALEMAN GOES SLAVING

PRESENTED BY TONY CONNORS

*10:30am, Friday, January 6*

*Westport Free Public Library, 408 Old County Road, Westport*

Westport native Edward Davoll learned whaling at 18, made captain by 25, and appeared to be on his way to a successful career. But some bad luck and a downturn in the whaling industry in the 1850s, coupled with his disillusionment with life at sea, led him to engage in the illegal slave trade in 1860. This presentation describes the peculiar connection between whaling and the slave trade, and offers some explanation for the existence of slave trading in southeastern New England, an area known for anti-slavery sentiment. Suggested donation \$5.

Check our website for updates on the ongoing winter history forum programs on the first Friday morning of each month.

[www.wpthistory.org](http://www.wpthistory.org)