

HARBINGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY WWW.WPTHISTORY.ORG
PO BOX N188, WESTPORT, MA 02790-1203, WESTPORTHISTORY@WESTPORTHISTORY.NET

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

Summer 2017, vol.50, no.2



YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY OPENS THE GATEWAY TO AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF WESTPORT'S PAST.

Imagine travelling by horse and buggy along East Beach, stopping in at the bowling alley and dining at the Surfside Hotel. Imagine pulling the curtains closed tightly as rum-runners pass by your home during Prohibition era Westport. Imagine the 19th-century river, bustling with shipbuilding, salt-works, and mills. Although we may not be able to physically time travel, we invite you to take a virtual journey through time by supporting our many activities this year.

WE ARE EXCITED TO OFFER YOU A SUMMER FULL OF JOURNEYS AND EXPLORATIONS:

- A special exhibition at the Handy House "Headwaters to Harbor" will take you on a journey through time to explore the history of our relationship with the river, harbor, streams and ponds highlighting Prohibition era rum-runners, the drama of sword fishing, and the community of pre-hurricane East Beach.
- Join in our inaugural House Tour on August 6, 2017—a chance to tour seven spectacular private homes located throughout Westport.
- Follow in the footsteps of the remarkable Paul Cuffe as we mark the 200th anniversary of his death with a symposium and town-wide tour of locations connected to his life.
- Take a self-guided walking tour of the Head and the Point (available on our website this July!)
- Entertain the kids and grandkids (and parents and grandparents too!) with Westport Summer Passport and Handy House Backpack Adventures. Meet the "Spooky Spirits" at the Handy House this Halloween.
- Our lecture series will highlight a wide range of themes from the history of Gooseberry to the extraordinary and rarely seen art created by Westport whalemens as they voyaged the world.
- Mark your calendar to meet some of Westport's traditional craftspeople at our annual Handy House Artisan Fair on September 30th.

The photos above are from a recent donation by Al Lees III

above left:
Fishermen's shacks at Westport Point

above right:
Charles R. Gifford and Mr. Collins

See pages 8-10 for more!

Many of you will have received membership renewal reminders. If you have already renewed, THANK YOU! If you are still considering renewing or becoming a member, one third of our operating income is generated by membership renewals so your support has a great impact! You can join or renew by visiting our website.



THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BOARD MEMBERS

President: Tony Connors

Vice President: Yvonne Barr

Treasurer: Charles "Buzzy" Baron

Clerk: Emily Sutton

Libby Baylies

Howard Gifford

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Artisan Fair Committee: Emily Sutton

Collections Committee: Yvonne Barr

Development Committee: Carol Bonnar

Facilities Committee: Yvonne Barr

Finance Committee: Buzzy Baron

House Tour Committee: Sharon Connors

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.

25 Drift Road, Westport, MA 02790

website www.wpthistory.org

phone 508-636-6011

email westporthistory@westporthistory.net

Find us on Facebook!



HEADWATERS TO HARBOR: WESTPORT'S HERITAGE OF WATER



OPENING JULY 8

AT THE HANDY HOUSE
202 HIX BRIDGE ROAD

A celebration of the unique heritage and identity of Westport. Since the ice age, water has shaped our landscape. From the smallest streams to the wide Atlantic Ocean, it has influenced the people and culture of Westport, and remains a significant part of our lives 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.

This exhibition will take the visitor on four distinct "visual journeys" to highlight the changing nature of our relationship with this environment:

- A visual river journey through time exploring both the east and west branches, harbor and ponds of Westport.
- A visual walk down East Beach using maps and photographs to document the community that once existed before the hurricane of 1938.
- A look inside the Cory Store to learn more about shipbuilding activities in Westport.
- A sword-fishing expedition using photographs taken by David Allen in the 1980s.

Supported by the Westport Cultural Council through a grant from the Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust administered by Bank of America.



House Tour

Sunday, August 6, 11am-4pm

THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY WILL HOST ITS INAUGURAL HOUSE TOUR ON AUGUST 6, 2017—A SELF-GUIDED LOOK AT SEVEN SPECTACULAR PRIVATE HOMES LOCATED THROUGHOUT WESTPORT.

The gracious owners of architecturally significant homes at the Point, the Harbor and in south Westport will throw open their doors and gardens to a limited number of visitors from 11am to 4pm.

The cost of this special let's-see-beyond-the-stone-wall opportunity is \$40 per person. Please reserve your tickets on the Society's website, www.wpthistory.org or by check using the enclosed return envelope.

Tickets are limited! Please consider becoming a sponsor. All sponsors receive a special invitation to the post tour party at the Westport Art Group's studio at the Point from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. where guests can wind down with cool drinks, nibbles and a look-see at the paintings and sketches from the homes on the tour.

Proceeds of the ticket sales will support the Westport Historical Society's on-going—and future—programs enjoyed by history enthusiasts as well as the upkeep of the Handy House, its own architectural gem.


HOUSE TOUR INFORMATION

The Tour takes about 2½ hours but you might want to allow extra time if you have limited mobility or just want to make stops along the way.

General admission for the Tour is \$40 (by credit card, cash, or check).

- Advance tickets can be purchased via our website using a credit card or phone 508-636-6011 or by check using the enclosed return envelope.
- Day of the Tour tickets can be purchased at Partners Village Store, 865 Main Road (by credit card, cash or check).
- The number of tickets is limited. Don't miss out! Purchase your tickets TODAY!

All tickets must be picked up on the day of the Tour at Partners Village Store, 865 Main Road, Westport. If you purchased your ticket in advance, your name will be on the list at the ticketing table. Your tour booklet will serve as your ticket.



A Walk through History: Westport Point and the Head of Westport

The Historical Society has been leading guided tours of Westport Point and the Head of Westport for some time. This year we decided it would be helpful for people to be able take these tours whenever they wanted, so we have developed self-guided tours of the two most historic villages in Westport.

These walking tours will show you historic architecture, from pre-revolutionary houses to stunning Greek Revivals and Victorians from the mid-19th century to a Powder House from the War of 1812 era. But more than houses, it's a walk through history, with stories such as the Westport "pauper" who became the richest man in New Bedford, and the restaurant that was swept away in the 1954 hurricane with the bartender still inside.

It's educational, it's fun, and it's free!
Download your self-guided walking tour at
www.wpthistory/explore

Collection News

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

2017.002 DONATED BY CLAUDE LEDOUX

Ice cutting saw from Mouse Mill Pond.

2017.007 DONATED BY CHARLES DEKNATEL

Fowling piece and Native American point.

2017.008 DONATED BY WILLIAM LOGAN

Thomas B. Cory ledgers and spelling book.

2017.010 TONY GRACIA

Head of Westport Fire Association records.

2017.019 DONATED BY ALBERT LEES III

Postcards and photographs of Westport.

2017.020 DONATED BY SUE DEXTER

Account books, published books, stereo-cards belonging to A.H. Cory.

2017.021 DONATED BY JACK WILKINSON

Film footage of Cadmans Neck and Westport River before and after the 1938 hurricane.

2017.024 DONATED BY JAN HALL

Postcards of Westport.

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

Visit www.wpthistory.org

EDUCATION NEWS



During this school year, the Historical Society was able to expand its programs at the Macomber Primary School. We taught the Kindergarten about the history and science of the Macomber Turnip. First graders learned about Sarah Turner, a local hero from 1888. First graders were also introduced to proper museum collection procedures when they were shown the medal for bravery presented to Sarah when she was about 14 years old. Second graders learned about Paul Cuffe through a mapping project and an art project.

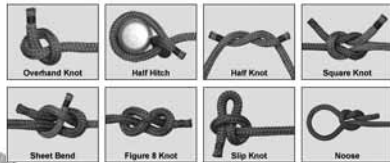
Our first after school program took place at the Westport Elementary School where students were taught how to cross stitch a small ornament of the Bell School. The third grade will once again visit the Bell School and learn about the shipbuilding history at the Head of Westport. As part of the WRWA 6th grade program at the Head, those students will also learn about the history and uses of the Noquochoke branch of the Westport River in early June. All of the programming offered is tied to Massachusetts school curricula standards.

We would like to thank Dr. Anne Dargon, MAC Principal Carolyn Pontes, Elementary School Principal Tom Gastall, the kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade teachers for their support and cooperation in integrating our curricula into their school day. We would especially like to thank our wonderful Children's Heritage Education docents: Irene Allie, Thelma Dagostino, Nancy DeVilleurs, Sarah Gifford, Karen Goddard, Alice Huff, Nancy Mailhot, Marilyn Packard Luther, and Robin Winters for all of their help with this year's school programming. We could not accomplish all that we do without their gracious help, support, and good humor.

Above, 5th grader Vanessa Mello holds her completed cross stitch of the Bell School.

Westport Summer Passport

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY - THE SEA SUMMER OF '17 ADVENTURES FOR KIDS AT HANDY HOUSE!



Wednesdays in August, 10-11:30am

Ages 10-15 years old, space is limited

\$12/session for WHS members

\$15/session for non-members

(supply costs included in fee)

Cadman-White-Handy House,

202 Hix Bridge Road, Westport, MA



KNOT TYING

Wednesday, August 2

Erika Hamer is a 2nd generation knot tying expert. She will demonstrate various knots, explaining their use on ships and in the whaling industry. Kids will learn to make their own hand knotted key chain!

SCRIMSHAW

Wednesday, August 9

Growing up in Westport, Howie Gifford heard whaling tales of his ancestors. He will share those stories along with explaining the scrimshaw process with an easy activity kids can take home and share with their family!



WAMPUM

Wednesday, August 16

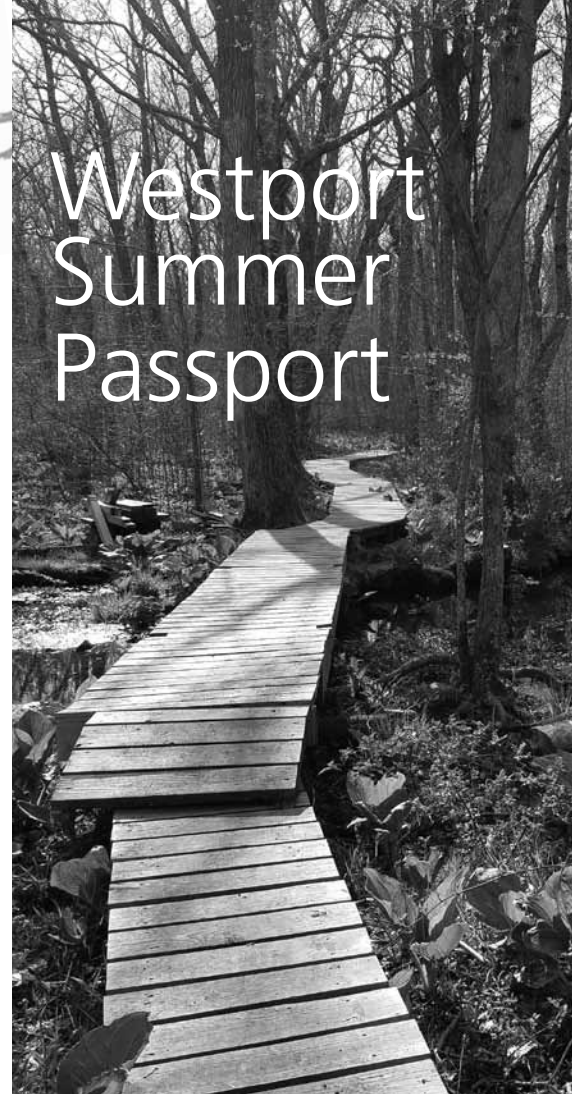
Artist Elizabeth Perry is a member of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head—Aquinnah, specializing in traditional arts of the Northeastern Woodlands Native culture. She will introduce the history and process of making wampum that kids can try as well!

WESTPORT HOME LIFE OF THE 1850S

Wednesday, August 23

Ruth and Abby, the 1850s Ladies, will teach kids crafts and games enjoyed by families of whalers and sailors as they awaited the return of their fathers, brothers, and sons.

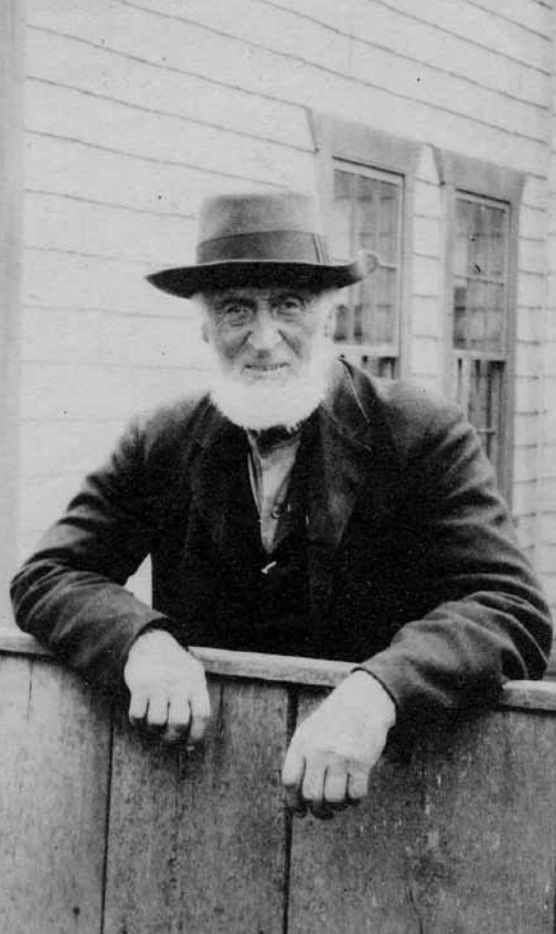
To register, visit www.wpthistory.org
Questions? Please e-mail: education@westporthistory.net or call: 508-636-6011



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. Your mission: visit each of the places featured in this year's passport. Just pick your first location and go! Download your passport at www.wpthistory.org. Free and available through the end of August. Co-sponsored by the Westport Land Conservation Trust and Westport Education Foundation.





Left: William Potter Howland. From a recent donation by Al Lees III, 2017.019

Calendar of Events

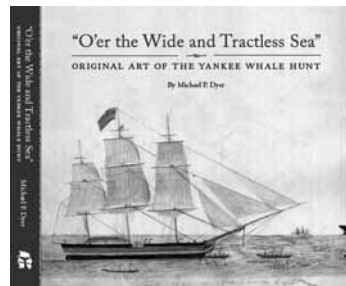


Illustration drawn in Westporter Perry Wing's journal onboard the whaling bark Dunbarton.



THE HANDY HOUSE

202 HIX BRIDGE ROAD, WESTPORT
IS OPEN EVERY SATURDAY

July 8-October 28, 10am-4pm

Ongoing activities at the Handy House:
Guided tours of the Handy House every
Saturday morning at 11am.

HEADWATERS TO HARBOR:
WESTPORT HERITAGE OF WATER
An exhibition.

FAMILY REUNION

Pick up a backpack when you visit the
Handy House and inside you will find
puzzles, clues and tools that will take
you on a playful adventure through this
historic home. Free.

SUMMER OF '17 ADVENTURES FOR KIDS AT HANDY HOUSE!

Wednesdays in August, 10-11:30am
See page 5 for details.

O'ER THE WIDE AND TRACTLESS SEA:

THE ART OF THE YANKEE WHALE HUNT

Presented by Michael Dyer
Thursday, July 20, 7pm

Westport Free Public Library, 408 Old County
Road, Westport

Buried deep within the logbooks, journals
and manuscripts of America's 19th
century whaling heritage are watercolor
paintings and other drawings and repre-
sentations of the hunt rarely if ever seen
by the public. Using the collection of the
New Bedford Whaling Museum, Michael
Dyer has provided an unparalleled
opportunity to bring these hidden artworks
into the public eye with a new publication,
available this July. The drawings by
Westport whalers will be highlighted
in this presentation.

Michael P. Dyer is Senior Maritime
Historian at the New Bedford Whaling
Museum. He was the inaugural U.S.A.
Gallery Fellow at the Australia National
Maritime Museum in 2008, and a 38th
Voyager onboard the Charles W. Morgan
in 2014.

Suggested donation \$5.

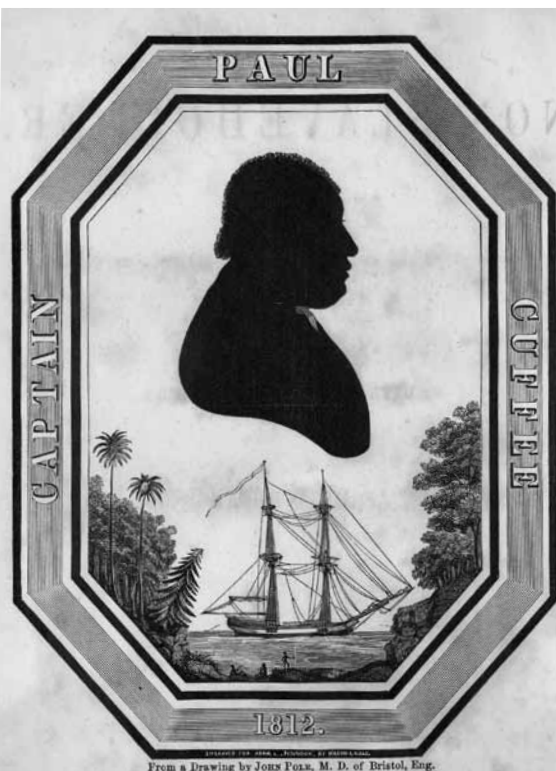


HOUSE TOUR

Sunday, August 6, 11am-4pm

A self-guided look at seven spectacular
private homes located throughout the
idyllic SouthCoast town. The cost of this
special let's-see-beyond-the-stone-wall
opportunity is \$40 per person. **TICKETS ARE
LIMITED!** Please reserve your tickets on the
Society's website, www.wpthistory.org or
mail a check using the enclosed return
envelope.

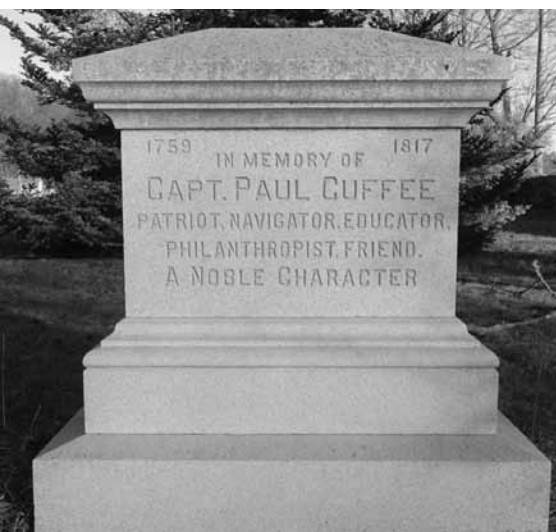




PAUL CUFFE: FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS
Saturday, September 16-Sunday, September 17
 Westport Grange, 931 Main Road, Westport

A day-long symposium presenting new information about Paul Cuffe as well as a forum for community dialog about the legacy of Paul Cuffe and his significance to our national story in the 21st century. A new African American Native American Heritage Trail will be launched. Please visit our website for more details about the symposium.

Supported by the Westport Cultural Council through a grant from the Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust administered by Bank of America.



HANDY HOUSE ARTISAN FAIR
Saturday, September 30, 10am-3pm
 Showcasing 30 local craftspeople who specialize in skills and traditional crafts commonly practiced in the 18th and 19th century. The Artisan Fair offers a rare opportunity to meet these craftspeople, learn about their skilled hand work and human powered technologies through hands-on demonstrations.



WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, October 19, 7pm
 (Venue TBA)



DR. HANDY AND THE SPOOKY SPIRITS

Saturday, October 28, 10am-3pm
 at the Handy House 202 Hix Bridge Road, Westport. Free.

Little ghouls, ghosts and goblins are invited to converge at the Handy House to enjoy some family friendly spooky activities. Free.



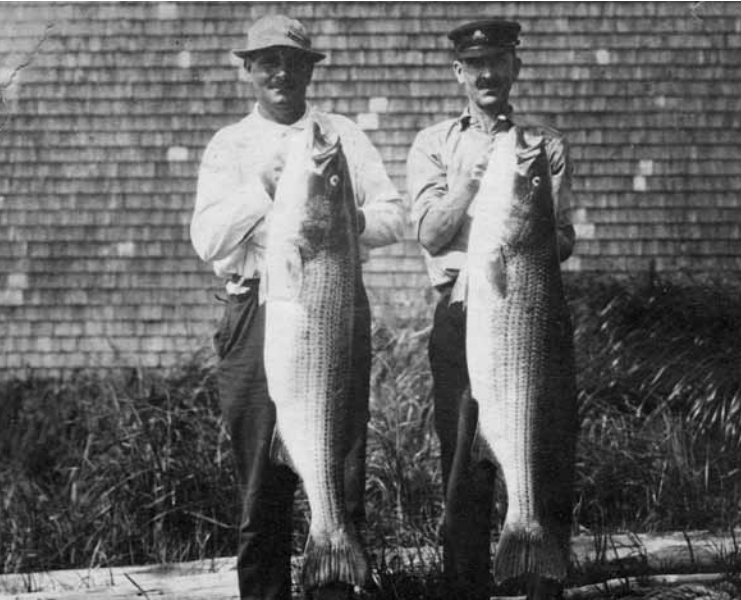
Images from a recent donation by Al Lees III

We heard some wonderful stories during Al Lees' presentation of highlights from his father's collection of photographs and postcards. We are excited to share some images from a recent donation by Al Lees to the Westport Historical Society. You can also view and comment on some of these images on our Facebook page and website.

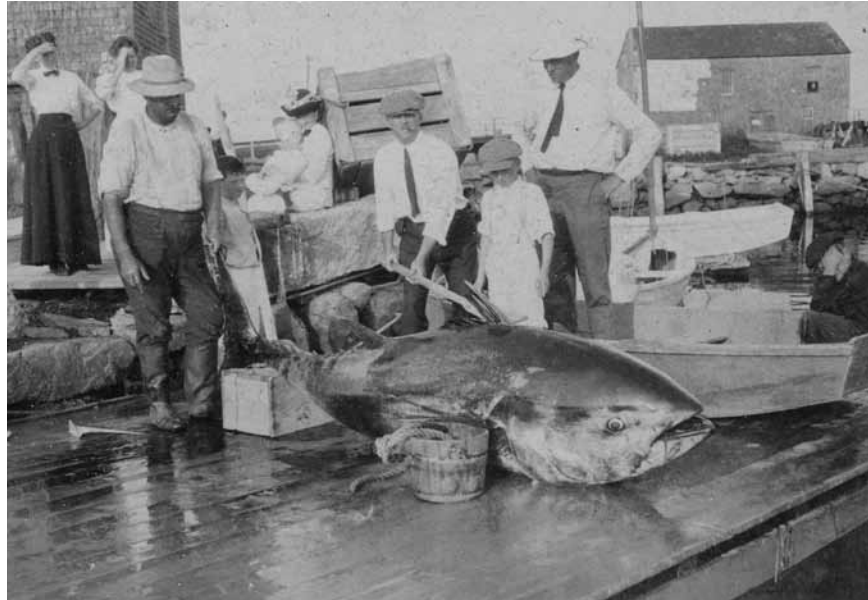
Can you help identify any of these images? We would love to hear from you!



Can you help us identify this image?



Can you help us identify these fishermen?



A crowd gathers near Lees Wharf to view the catch of the day!



Lees wharf during the 1954 Hurricane.





A good day's fishing. Who is in this photograph?



Westporters gather outside Potters Lunch tent at the Westport Fair.



Marina Tripp Gifford (1797-1897) on her 100th birthday sitting outside her house on Cornell Road.



Where was this school located?



Is this the cannon that used to stand at the Head of Westport?



An extremely rare view of a building at the Head of Westport located on the triangle near the bridge on Old County Road. This building is now located across the street at 464 Old County Road.

Herb Hadfield with owl.



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.

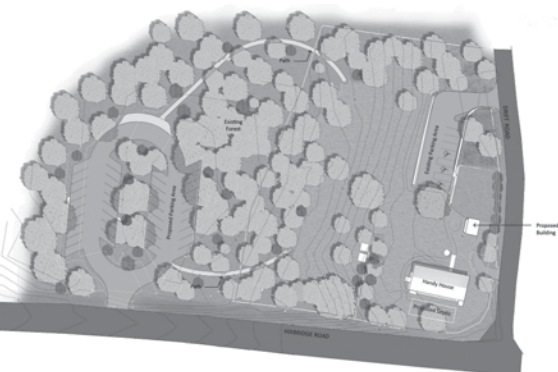
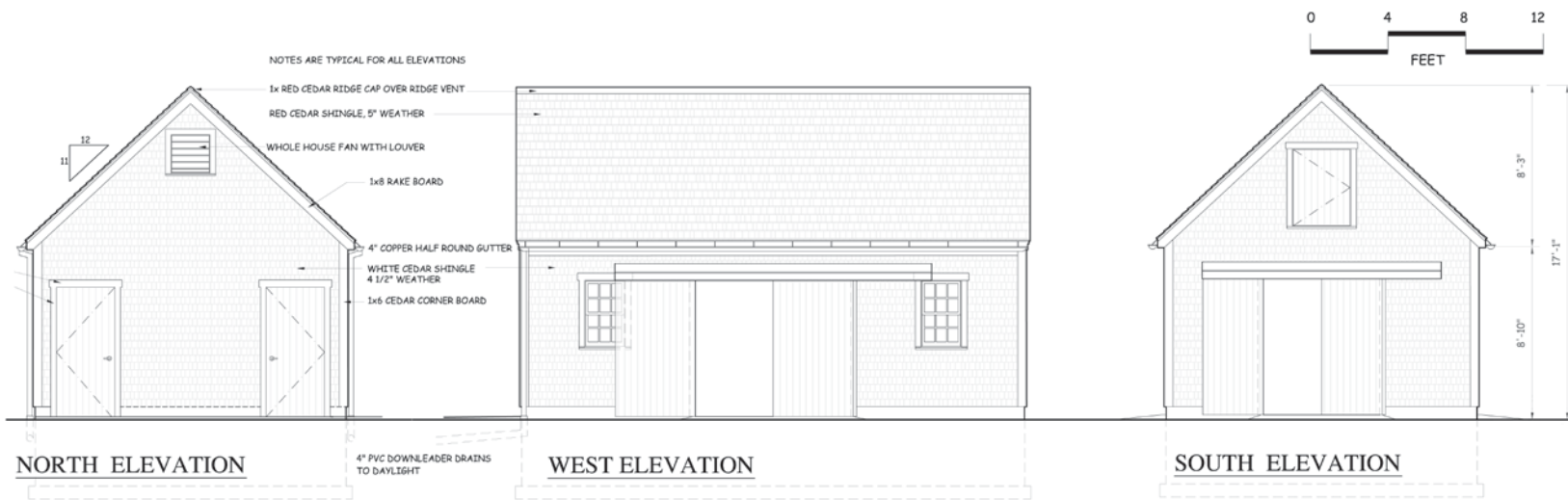
BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS

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

Thank you TO OUR BUSINESSES MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT:

Attorney Dorothy P. Tongue P.C.
 Baycoast Bank
 Bradshaw Insurance
 Country Woolens
 Credit Card Reviews
 Gray's Daily Grind and Gray's Gristmill
 Geraldine Millham Design
 Jack's Landscaping and Lawn Service
 Jussaume and Wendell DDS
 Lees Market
 Lees Wine and Spirits
 Paquachuck Inn
 Partners Village Store
 Potter Funeral Home
 Slocum Design Studio
 Southcoast Realty
 Southcoast Payroll
 Shattuck Gallery
 Tim's Lawn Care
 Westport Chiropractic





BREAKING NEW GROUND AT THE HANDY HOUSE

This spring the Westport Historical Society broke ground for improved visitor amenities including a building to accommodate restrooms, a larger parking area, and woodland trails.

This project was made possible through a generous challenge grant from The Manton Foundation which has been matched by many individuals in Westport who recognize the value of the Handy House as a community resource and asset. A new septic system was funded with Community Preservation Act funding.

"We are deeply grateful to the many individuals who contributed to the challenge grant and we are excited by the community's reaction to our public programming at the Handy House," Jenny O'Neill, Westport Historical Society Executive Director stated. "The Handy House is a gateway into the remarkable stories of our town, focusing on providing changing experiences for visitors such as exhibitions that explore local history, small events such as our mid-week informal talks as well as our enormously successful annual signature events such as the Artisan Fair and Halloween activities. These new amenities will help us to build upon the value of the Handy House as a community resource, a tourist destination and as a unique teaching tool for local schools."



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.



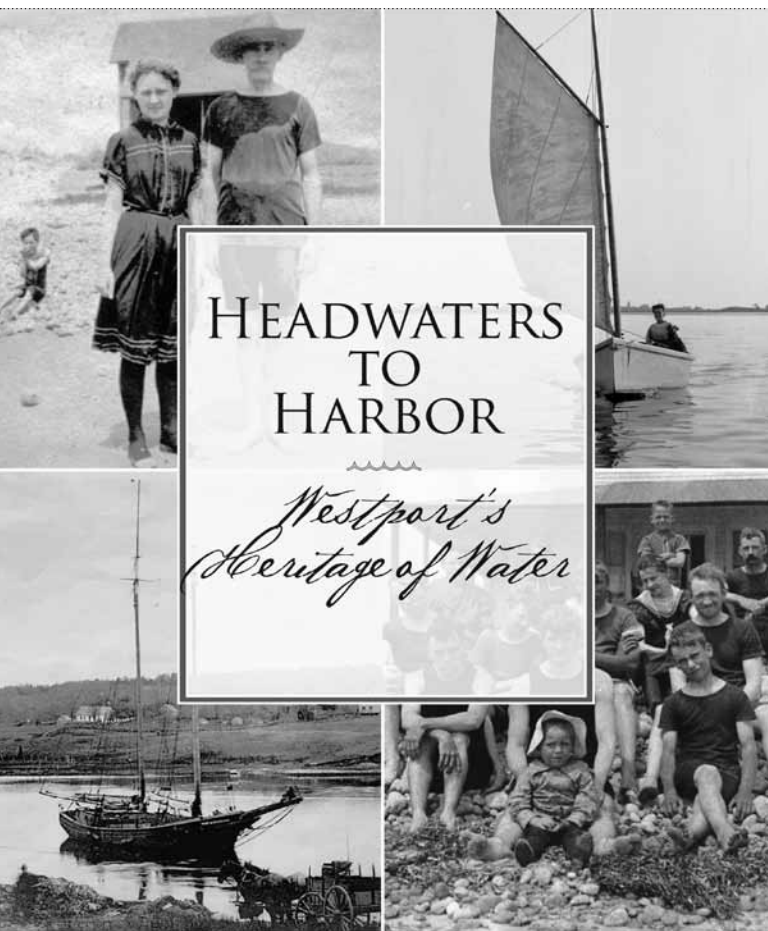
THE BETTY F. SLADE SCHOLARSHIP

This award was established in honor of Betty F. Slade whose research and preservation activities have greatly benefited the town of Westport. We are pleased to announce that this \$500 scholarship was awarded to Connor Brown, Westport High School graduate. We wish him well for the next phase in his studies!

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
25 DRIFT ROAD, PO BOX N188, WESTPORT, MA 02790

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
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Fall River MA
Permit No.323



HEADWATERS TO HARBOR: WESTPORT'S HERITAGE OF WATER

An exhibition opening

JULY 8 AT THE HANDY HOUSE, 202 HIX BRIDGE ROAD

- A visual river journey through time exploring both the east and west branches, harbor and ponds of Westport.
- A walk down East Beach using maps and photographs to document the community that once existed before the hurricane of 1938.
- A look inside the Cory Store to learn more about shipbuilding activities in Westport.
- A sword-fishing expedition using photographs taken by David Allen in the 1980s.

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A FREE EXHIBITION AT THE HANDY HOUSE,
202 HIX BRIDGE ROAD, WESTPORT MA

www.wpthistory.org