

# HARBINGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY [WWW.WPTHISTORY.ORG](http://WWW.WPTHISTORY.ORG)  
PO BOX N188, WESTPORT, MA 02790-1203, [WESTPORTHISTORY@WESTPORTHISTORY.NET](mailto:WESTPORTHISTORY@WESTPORTHISTORY.NET)

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

Summer 2018



1. Two women on the beach  
at Westport Harbor.  
2008.057.004

2. Children dressed up at  
Westport Harbor: Sally  
Dennett, Allen Thatcher,  
Alice Barker, Nancy Dennett,  
Betty Davol Wood.  
2008.057.001

3. Group sits outside house  
at Horseneck Beach on West  
Beach before '38 Hurricane.  
2006.042.253

Dear neighbors, members and friends of the Westport Historical Society,

Happy summer! At the Westport Historical Society we are keeping Westport memories alive for today's residents and for future generations. Your annual membership gifts to the Historical Society sustain our efforts to preserve and present to you the stories, records and artifacts that help us to remember and interpret the history of Westport. Our lectures, programs, tours and special events are organized from these sources to help you see into the lives of those who made history—Westport's earliest residents. If you have already renewed your membership—thank you! As a reminder, you can join or renew your membership via our website ([www.wpthistory.org](http://www.wpthistory.org))

Members receive *The Harbinger* newsletter as well as advance notice and invitations to all of our special events. *The Harbinger* is a trove of Westport stories and Historical Society special events are popular, well attended and a great way to see old friends and meet new Westport neighbors.

This spring and summer we invite you to engage with Westport's rich history—learn, explore and be inspired by a slate of very special events we have created just for you, your friends and families. Read more about each event inside this issue of *Harbinger*.

Save the dates and join your neighbors—we'll see you there! Here is a brief overview of events and activities—details inside.

- ☞ 2nd Annual Westport House Tour - register today
- ☞ Handy House Events
- ☞ Summer lectures: Westport by land and sea
- ☞ Artisan Fair
- ☞ Self-guided tours
- ☞ Summer Passport

Thank you!

*Tony Connors*

Tony Connors, President

*Jenny O'Neill*

Jenny O'Neill, Executive Director



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#### **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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Find us on Facebook!







# House Tour

**Sunday, July 29, 11am-4pm**

**AFTER LAST YEAR'S WONDERFUL EVENT, WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THE 2ND ANNUAL HOUSE TOUR ON JULY 29. ALL THE HOUSES ON THIS YEAR'S TOUR ARE DIFFERENT FROM LAST YEAR.**

The gracious owners, stewards of historically significant homes located throughout Westport, will throw open their doors and gardens to a limited number of visitors from 11 am to 4 pm. This is a special glimpse into the history of these homes that convey vividly life in Westport yesterday and today.

Tickets are \$40 per person. Please reserve your tickets on the Society's website [www.wpthistory.org](http://www.wpthistory.org) or by check using the enclosed return envelope.

**SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR WESTPORT AND BECOME A CORPORATE OR INDIVIDUAL SPONSOR.**

All sponsors are recognized in the tour program and are invited to the post tour party at the Handy House from 4 pm to 6 pm where guests can wind down with cool drinks and nibbles.

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

**HOUSE TOUR DETAILS ([WWW.WPTHISTORY.ORG](http://WWW.WPTHISTORY.ORG))**

The Tour takes about 2 ½ 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 ([www.wpthistory.org](http://www.wpthistory.org)) using a credit card, or phone 508-636-6011, or by check using the enclosed return envelope.
- The number of tickets is limited. Don't miss out! Purchase your tickets TODAY! If any tickets are left, day of the Tour tickets can be purchased at Partners Village Store, 865 Main Road (by credit card, cash or check).
- Boxed lunch (\$12.50) available from Partners, order in advance, please contact Partners to place your order.

## **TICKETS ARE LIMITED, REGISTER 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.



**PRESENTING SPONSOR: BAYCOAST BANK**







WWW.  
PaulCuffe.  
org

A NEW WEBSITE DEDICATED TO  
PAUL CUFFE LAUNCHED IN 2018

This website is dedicated to documenting current and ongoing research about the lives of Cuff Slocum, Paul Cuffe, Michael Wainer, and their descendants and associates. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Westport/Dartmouth/New Bedford area was home to three remarkable families of African and Native American heritage. In an era when slavery was still prevalent in both the South and North and Native Americans were being driven from their homelands, these families provided living testimony to the potentials of the human spirit across all peoples.



1.

## WESTPORT'S UNDERGROUND HISTORY



2.



3.





Many of you have probably unearthed interesting artifacts in the woods, fields or even in your own backyard. Unlike other coastal towns, Westport has escaped extensive modern development, and thus retains a high sensitivity for both pre-historic and historic archaeological resources to be present throughout the town. Local archaeological discoveries can shed light on Native American heritage, industrial activities, agricultural and maritime activities.

This summer we are excited to focus on archaeology as a way for us to understand the past and to engage audiences in the future of this field of study. Our new exhibition "Infinite Details" showcases a tiny percentage of two extensive archaeological collections from the Waite-Kirby-Potter site and the Handy House. Taken together these two collections tell a story about our community and the reshaping of everyday life between 1700-1850. By matching these artifacts with probate inventories from those who lived at the Handy House, we can build a vivid picture of the 18th century home.



However, the lure of archaeology is mostly in the "doing," "digging," and "discovering." If you yearn to unleash your inner Indiana Jones, join us for a hands-on Archaeology Day, August 25, and bring your own discoveries for identification.

On July 19 you can hear more about how new technologies can reveal the special archaeological landscape of Westport with Public Archaeology Lab archaeologist Holly Herbster.

Please take a look at our calendar of upcoming events to learn more about Westport's "underground history."

1. Stone stairs at the Gifford Rule Factory, Head of Westport.

2. Lye stone at the Gifford Rule Factory site, Head of Westport.

3. Teacups and saucers found at the Waite-Kirby-Potter site excavations.

4. Waite-Kirby-Potter stone-end chimney.

5. Medicine bottle found at the Waite-Kirby-Potter site.

6. An 18th century Rhenish stoneware tankard found at the Waite-Kirby-Potter site.



# WESTPORT SUMMER PASSPORT 2018



*Just Add Water!*

EXPLORE WESTPORT ON YOUR OWN  
OR WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

There is water everywhere in Westport and this fun self-guided family quest showcases our town's amazing marine heritage. Whether ocean, bay, river, or brook, water shaped Westport's economy, diet, culture, natural environment, work and leisure activities. Visit six awesome "watery" places featured in the free booklet, look around, and answer some fun questions. Complete the challenge questions and enter to win a prize basket. It's a perfect summer activity. Pick up a passport at the Handy House, Gray's Daily Grind or visit [www.wpthistory.org](http://www.wpthistory.org) to download and print your own passport.

Co-sponsored by  
Westport Historical Society,  
Westport Fishermen's Association,  
Westport Land Conservation Trust  
and Gray's Gristmill.

FIND WESTPORT SUMMER PASSPORT  
ON FACEBOOK!







## Calendar of Events

### WESTPORT'S UNDERGROUND HISTORY

Presented by Holly Herbster

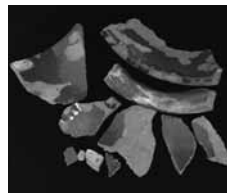
Thursday, July 19, 7pm

Dedee Shattuck Gallery, 1 Partners Lane,  
Westport

Join Holly Herbster from The Public Archaeology Lab to discover what archaeology reveals about Westport's diverse natural and social landscapes. Westport's history stretches back nearly 12,000 years.

In 2004, The Westport Historical Society funded a town-wide archaeological survey to collect information about known sites and to identify the types and locations of sites not yet documented. The study prompted archaeological projects in town, advances in digital mapping, and collaboration with Wampanoag historians—all of which have added to the story of Westport's deep past.

Holly Herbster is a Senior Archaeologist at The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL) in Pawtucket, Rhode Island and has spent 30 years researching south-eastern Massachusetts history. She was the lead archaeologist for the 2004 town-wide survey and has completed more than two dozen archaeological projects in Westport and the surrounding Bristol County communities. Suggested donation: \$5



### SEA STORIES

with retired harbormaster Richie Earle and assistant harbormaster Jonathan Paull  
Thursday, August 16, 7pm  
Westport Grange, 931 Main Road, Westport

Westport harbor is simultaneously beautiful and treacherous. Navigating its waters can be a difficult and frustrating experience for sailors. Historically, its deceptive appearance of an unbroken shoreline combined with treacherous currents, led the British in 1812 to refer to Westport Harbor as "the Devil's Pocket Hole".

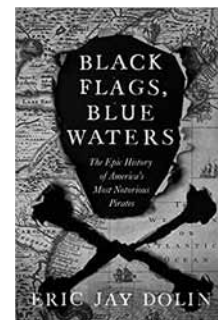
Retired harbormaster Richie Earle will share memories of his career as Westport's harbormaster. For over 25 years Richie responded to unpredictable challenges such as medical emergencies, lifesaving rescues and beached boats. In conversation with assistant harbor-master Jonathan Paull, they will share photos and stories as well as a historical perspective on earlier harbormasters such as Bob Sykes and Harry Tripp and Ab Palmer.

### WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, October 18, 6:30pm  
(venue tba)

#### ***Black Flags, Blue Waters: The Epic History of America's Most Notorious Pirates***

Set against the backdrop of the Age of Exploration, *Black Flags, Blue Waters* reveals the dramatic and surprising history of American piracy's "Golden Age"—spanning the late 1600s through the early 1700s—when lawless pirates plied the coastal waters of North America and beyond. Bestselling author Eric Jay Dolin illustrates how American colonists at first supported these outrageous pirates in an early display of colonial solidarity against the Crown, and then violently opposed them. Suggested donation \$5.



# Calendar of Events continued

THE HANDY HOUSE HAS BECOME THE "STAR" OF OUR SUMMER SEASON, A PLACE FOR YOU TO EXPLORE CHANGING EXHIBITIONS, GATHER FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ESCAPE INTO THE PAST. COME AND SEE WHAT IS NEW THIS SUMMER!



## THE HANDY HOUSE

Open *EVERY Saturday*  
July 7-October 28, 10am-4pm  
202 Hix Bridge Road, Westport  
Free and open to the public.

Ongoing activities at the Handy House:

- Guided tours of the Handy House every Saturday morning at 11am.
- 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.



## ARCHAEOLOGY DAY

Saturday, August 25, 10am-2pm  
Handy House, 202 Hix Bridge Road  
Free and open to the public

Indulge your inner Indiana Jones with a day full of archaeological fun for all ages! Do you like to dig in the dirt? Find things that are lost? Put pieces together? Figure out stories from clues? Learn about the past? These are all things archeologists do—maybe you're one, too!

This family-friendly day will introduce you to dirt-digging, story-telling, and mystery-solving fun.

- Kids can excavate for artifacts from a mock dig.
- Discover some of the techniques used by archaeologists.
- Bring your own 'finds' to be identified by archaeologists.
- View some of the amazing artifacts discovered at the Handy House and other sites in Westport.



## FALL HANDY HOUSE ARTISAN FAIR

Saturday, September 22, 10am-3pm  
(rain date September 23)

Our annual Handy House Artisan Fair showcases 30 local craftspeople who specialize in skills and traditional crafts commonly practiced in the 18th and 19th century. This year's Fair includes Wampanoag crafts, green wood working techniques, weaving, and rug braiding, plus lots of music and delicious food! Traditional craftsmanship, from blacksmithing to green woodworking, is still very much alive in Westport. Come to the Artisan Fair and speak with these extraordinary craftspeople, learn about their skilled hand work and human powered technologies through hands-on demonstrations. Free and open to the public





## HANDY HOUSE SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

OPEN EVERY SATURDAY, JULY TO THE END  
OF OCTOBER—CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR  
DETAILS A NEW EXHIBITION FEATURING  
OUR ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS  
OPENS JULY 7.



### HALLOWEEN AT THE HANDY HOUSE

*Saturday, October 27, 10am-3pm*

Handy House, 202 Hix Bridge Road, Westport

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



### INFINITE DETAILS:

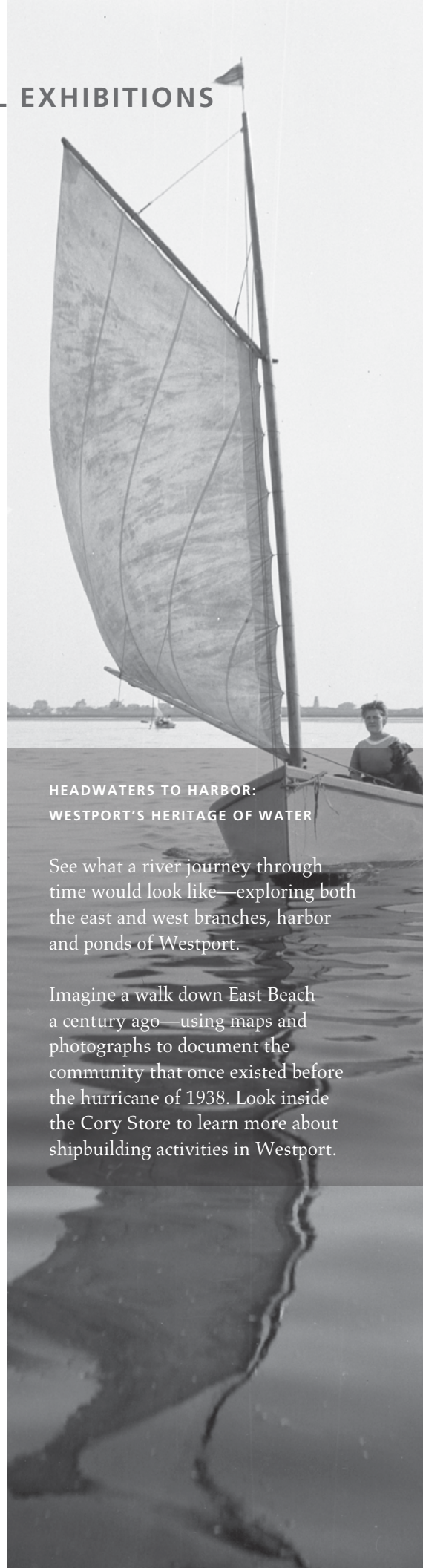
RESHAPING EVERYDAY LIFE 1700-1850

*"The life of every community  
is made up of infinite details."*

—Frances Underwood,  
historical ethnographer, 1893

What can a collection of thousands of fragments excavated in Westport tell us about everyday life in centuries past? This exhibition features archaeological treasures discovered at sites right here in Westport. From a magnificent stoneware tankard to pottery shards, this is as close to experiencing life in the 18th century as you can get!

above: Medicine bottle found at the the Waite-Kirby-Potter site.



### HEADWATERS TO HARBOR:

WESTPORT'S HERITAGE OF WATER

See what a river journey through time would look like—exploring both the east and west branches, harbor and ponds of Westport.

Imagine a walk down East Beach a century ago—using maps and photographs to document the community that once existed before the hurricane of 1938. Look inside the Cory Store to learn more about shipbuilding activities in Westport.





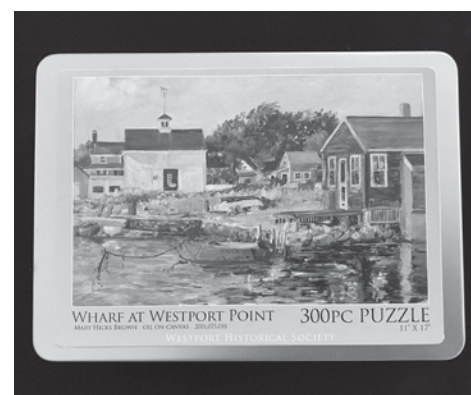
## BRAND NEW GIFT SELECTION!

Popular Harvest Festival poster designs by Betsy Macdonald

- Unique jigsaw puzzles and posters

Available at the Handy House and the Bell School.

• Your purchase supports the ongoing care and preservation of our collection!



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 Delaney Wilkinson, a Westport High School graduate, for her essay on Prohibition in Westport. We wish her well for the next phase in her studies!





## WESTPORT POINT AND HEAD OF WESTPORT self-guided walking tours

The Historical Society has been leading guided tours of Westport Point and the Head of Westport for years. This year we invite you to take a self-guided tour of the two most historic villages in Westport. These walking tours highlight 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. Against these architectural details, this walk through history shares little known Westport 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 walking tour

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

# Support

WESTPORT LOCAL HISTORY PRESERVATION, DOCUMENTATION, EXPLORATION, EDUCATION AND EVENTS. YOUR GENEROSITY AND INVOLVEMENT WITH THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUSTAINS OUR WORK TO KEEP WESTPORT MEMORIES ALIVE FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILIES, AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

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.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THIS SUMMER AND FALL.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

# Thank you

TO OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT:

Attorney Dorothy P. Tongue P.C.

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Gray's Daily Grind and Gray's Gristmill

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Shattuck Gallery

Tim's Lawn Care

Westport Chiropractic

Westport Federal Credit Union





WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit  
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Fall River MA  
Permit No.323

# Infinite Details:

**Reshaping Everyday Life 1700-1850**



**A free exhibition of  
archaeological discoveries**

Handy House,  
202 Hix Bridge Road,  
Westport MA

Open Saturdays  
10 AM - 4 PM  
July through October

SUPPORTED BY THE WESTPORT CULTURAL COUNCIL THROUGH A GRANT FROM  
THE HELEN E. ELLIS CHARITABLE TRUST ADMINISTERED BY BANK OF AMERICA