



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

HARBINGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY www.wpthistory.org

PO BOX N188, WESTPORT, MA 02790-1203, WESTPORTHISTORY@WESTPORTHISTORY.NET

Winter 2024

Thank you for your support!

The real record of history is found in the lives of ordinary people who lived it. Some of the most valuable perspectives on more recent local history are not preserved in letters, diaries, and account books — the “stuff” of 19th century historical archives — but are enshrined in the minds and memories of our community elders. At the Historical Society, we frequently hear visitors lament the fact that they missed the opportunity to record memories and life experiences of their elder family members.

There is such a short window of time to capture this information, but we can look with pride at the exceptional archive of conversations and oral histories captured over the years, starting in the 1970s and continuing to the present day. Moreover, with your help and support, we can make a greater effort to preserve local knowledge that is on the cusp of disappearing. Please understand that our interest is not limited to nonagenarians! There are many more stories that we need to capture from recent decades – for example, this October’s program featuring Westport’s swordfish boat captains.

Looking back at 2023, we will remember it for its dire weather forecasts of torrential rain, hurricanes, and wildfire smoke. Fortunately, an understanding of the past can act as a counter balance to present day anxiety, perhaps a reason behind the popularity of our public programs. Our year will be remembered for the diverse stories encountered during our Cemetery Tour; the brilliant interactions between local craftspeople and visitors at our annual Handy House Artisan Fair; the much-admired bonnets, bustles and bloomers of our summer exhibition; and the unexpectedly rich collections and stories associated with Westport’s French Canadian families and the Grange history project.

We are deeply grateful for your on-going support of the Society. This annual appeal is the foundation for our year to come and your participation is critical to our success. You can donate securely in memory of/in honor of an individual and set up recurring monthly donations using a credit card via our website. You have our heartfelt thanks for the support.

Thank you!



French Canadian families of Westport gathered at the Handy House to share their stories.



Found on the Watuppa Grange stage, this flag displays stars representing grangers who fought in World War II and World War I.



Don't forget to save your Lees Market receipts. You can drop them off at Partners Store or mail them to the Westport Historical Society. Lees Market generously donates **1%** of the total receipt value.



BOARD MEMBERS

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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.

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Find us on Facebook 

CALENDAR OF EVENTS WINTER/SPRING 2024

WINTER HISTORY FORUM 2024

The Civil War in 3D

10 AM and 2 PM Saturday January 13 at the Westport Public Library

The Civil War remains very much in the American consciousness, not least because it was extensively photographed. While most people have seen the famous images, few know that they were shot with stereo cameras. Come see the images as they were meant to be seen. Seating is limited for this event, two sessions are offered, reserve your seat in advance at: www.wpthistory.org.

Have you seen a USO (Unidentified Stone Object)?

2 PM Saturday March 16 at the Westport Public Library

Archaeologists will shed light on the many mysterious stone remnants found in our local landscape, from millstones and lye stones to foundations, and more! Bring along photos of stone structures for discussion and identification.

A Conversation about North Westport

(check our website for scheduling details)

Join residents of North Westport for a discussion about aspects of this community. This program will cover a wide range of North Westport themes from Watuppa Pond, casinos, night clubs, farms, schools, and the Fall River Reservation. All are welcome to participate.

Hurricane!

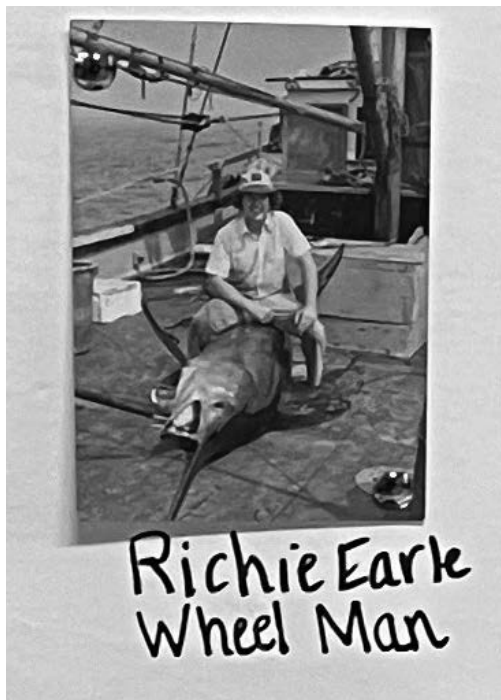
Exhibition of images on show at the Westport Library
February/March 2024

Climate extremes have been a daily topic this year. We will look back at the impact of hurricanes on Westport by marking the 70th anniversary of Hurricane Carol with a special exhibition in February/March at the Westport Library. This exhibition will feature images from the collection of the Westport Historical Society, highlighting dramatic rescues and experiences of those living along the shoreline at East Beach, the Point and Westport Harbor and tracing the impact of Hurricane Carol on the decision to create Horseneck State Reservation.

Unfurling the stories of the women of Westport Point

The village at the end of Main Road has been home to whaling captains, fishermen, and farmers. Their names are recorded on the plaques that adorn each house. The Point was also home to their wives, mothers, and daughters. Moreover, in the 20th century, it became home to some remarkable women. This research project seeks to unfurl their life stories which are so closely tied to houses that line Main Road at Westport Point.

Learn more at: www.wpthistory.org



Swordfishing Tales

Enjoy stories and memories as recounted by Westport's swordfish boat captains and the pilots of the planes that spotted swordfish: Everett Mills, Grant Moore, Jimmy King, Paul Brayton, Richie Earle, and Howie Gifford. www.wpthistory.org/2023/09/swordfishing/

French Canadian Families of Westport

French Canadians first began to settle in Westport and Dartmouth in the mid-1800s. Many came to work in the Fall River mills and for the Westport Manufacturing Company. By 1900, French Canadians made up 10% of Westport's population. Many settled in the Westport Factory Village located on Forge, Union, Beeden, and Highland Roads. www.wpthistory.org/2023/07/french-canadian-families-of-westport-and-dartmouth/

Bonnets, Bustles, and Bloomers

Did you miss our summer exhibition of Bonnets, Bustles, and Bloomers? View a tour of the exhibition by guest curator Blair Walker at www.wpthistory.org/2023/07/bonnets-bustles-and-bloomers/

A Conversation with Charlie Chaves

At the age of 94, Charlie Chaves reflects on growing up in North Westport. Topics include: farming, slaughter houses, Lincoln Park, Hi Way Casino, North Westport, and the Watuppa Grange. www.wpthistory.org/westport-historical-society-programs/

A tour of North Westport and Watuppa Pond with Mary Ann Lamontagne

Roads/streets Latessa Square, Tickle Road, Briggs Road, Watuppa Pond, Christopher Circle, Patricia Way, Lassonde Street, Route 6 Topics: Growing up in Westport in the 1950s and 1960s, French Canadian families, Fall River, the brook running between 177 to Watuppa Pond, slab bridge, mill pond, Marceau family, oldest tree in Westport, logging, Briggs Road development, Boy's Beach, sea planes, Holly Hill Campground, summer at Watuppa Pond, cottages on Watuppa, Edgewater, Bordens, Howard Johnsons moved from Route 6 and Sanford Road, Marceau family, Bordens, Dr. Violet, night clubs, casinos, Lamplighter, Whites of Westport, Carnival Drive In, and Walters Farm. www.wpthistory.org/westport-historical-society-programs/



Charlie Chaves

Conversation with Russ Hart

www.wpthistory.org/westport-historical-society-programs/

FARMING & DANCING:



THE TALE OF WESTPORT'S TWO GRANGES

In 2023 Westport Historical Society and Westport Grange #181 launched a project to dig into the history of the Grange. Our efforts led to a number of exciting discoveries — an extensive archive charting the development of Grange #181, curious artifacts used during the secret rituals, and the rediscovery of a hand-painted advertising curtain at the Watuppa Grange Hall, complementing the curtain at the Westport Grange #181.

Founded after the Civil War in 1867, The Grange, officially named The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, is a social organization that encourages families to band together to promote the economic and political well-being of the community and agriculture.

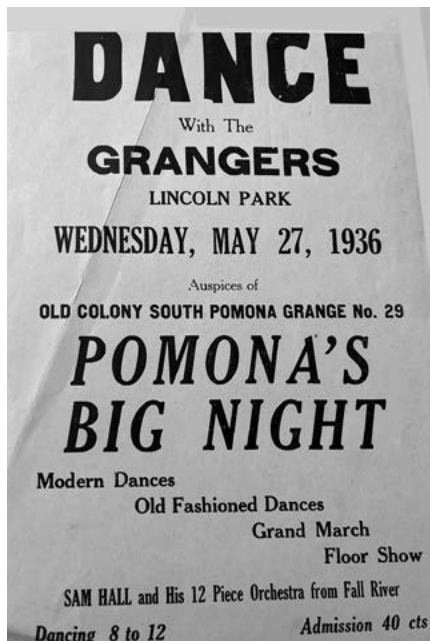
There were two Granges in Westport: Westport Grange #181 on Main Road, Central Village and the Watuppa Grange #365 on Old Bedford Road, North Westport. Although the Watuppa Grange Hall still stands, the organization is no longer active. In contrast, the Westport Grange #181 has survived and thrives as an active community group.

In the early 20th century, these two organizations were significant community hubs, providing cooperation and mutual aid for farmers, a progressive structure welcoming women as officers, a Masonic-style mystical ritual, and a venue for entertainment offering plays, dances, suppers, and concerts. Most importantly, many Westporters met their future spouses at these social events.

The Watuppa Grange #365, Old Bedford Road

Incorporated in 1922, the Watuppa Grange #365 anchored the community of North Westport. It is closely associated with many families from that part of town: Youngs, Sampsons, Walshes, Brightmans, Blossoms, Bordens, Petteys, and Wordells. In the early years, Grange meetings were held in the First Christian Church on Old Bedford Road. By 1925, a building had been constructed on land donated by Alice Sampson. With a membership of 264 individuals, this Grange offered a busy schedule of lawn parties (including a chowder supper, ice cream, cake, and candy), a harvest supper, a carnival, music, dances, and plays. The organization formed a Juvenile Grange for younger residents.

By the 1980s, the Watuppa Grange was struggling to retain members. According to Grange member Beatrice Smith, “when the older members died, television came in, and there were other things to do, it stopped.”



A multi-sided sign with dance styles such as the duchess, waltz, two-step, schottische, and caprice.



Watuppa Grange Hall, Old Bedford Road.

The Westport Grange #181, Main Road

When Westport resident Samuel Macomber applied for membership to the Dartmouth Grange, the Grange master responded: "Why don't you start a Grange of your own?" Thus, with the encouragement from the neighboring Dartmouth Grange, the Westport Grange #181 was organized in 1890 with 36 charter members led by Cortez Allen. The Grange is closely associated with some familiar local families, among them the Allens, Jenneys, Potters, Macomers, Kirbys, Sanfords, Tripps, and Brightmans.

In 1893, a Cooperative Company, known as the Grange Union, was formed and a store was built near Handy's Corner, managed by Benjamin Allen. Incorporated in 1893, Grange members met in the Union Hall. They later purchased the hall, enlarging it and eventually moving the building. It forms part of the current grange hall which was dedicated in 1924.

The Westport Grange grew in membership to become one of the largest Granges in Massachusetts. Through the efforts of the Dance Committee which held dances regularly over 11 years, the mortgage was paid in full in 1946.

The Grange offered a busy schedule of social activities such as a Memorial Day dinner, a Children's Day at Cadmans Neck, graphophone entertainments, annual picnics, outings to regional sites such as Plymouth Rock, and a Strawberry Festival. In the 1890s Westport Grange partnered with the Dartmouth Grange to hold a cattle show and fair at Cadmans Neck. The Fall River Daily Evening reported on the first fair held in September 1893: "There was a large attendance, farmers patronizing the enterprise from a radius of 20 miles." Highlights of the fair included:

- An exhibition of fancy work that "showed to good advantage the handiwork of the ladies of the town."
- An exhibition of old-fashioned articles included a pair of corsets more than 100 years old.
- George E. Tripp of Westport exhibited seven varieties of apples and pears.
- A display of carrots, grapes, plums, peaches, and melons.
- "William H. Potter has on exhibition a duck 27 years old."
- "The plowing match prize awarded to Henry M. Plummer without a contest, he being the only contender."
- A 100-yard dash and a nail driving contest.
- "At noon with 4,000 people present, a mammoth clam dinner was served."

Grangers met twice a month to discuss farming techniques such as the proper method for raising fruits and growing corn, as well as tackling social issues. Discussions included: Which offers the greatest opportunity for a young man, agriculture, poultry, or a trade? and Immigration, Liquor and Trusts – Which is the greatest menace to our national prosperity?

The Grange as a Community Center (and dating service!)

Marion Reed on grange dances (interviewed by Mary Giles in 1976):

"I love to see people dance. The Grange had square dances. I love to watch. I didn't dance too much myself. Until World War II came and people couldn't get gas, this was a very thriving Grange. Then, people got older and people had more activities, bowling, etc."

Charles Costa on the grange as an entertainment center

(interviewed by Mary Giles in 1976):

"The Grange isn't as active today as it was before TV and cars. It used to be a place to go evenings. Weekends they had dances and suppers. They still do a little, but I know as a teenager, they were very, very active and they did have agricultural fairs in the fall



Sadie Sanford, former Grand Master of the Westport Grange.



Clifford Brightman points to his name on a commemorative plaque listing Grange members who fought in the Second World War.



Sam Manley, Grange historian

This curtain was an unexpected and visually vibrant discovery at the Watuppa Grange Hall. The pristine hand-painted advertising curtain with colorful ads for local businesses, c. 1940, surrounding a peaceful lakeside scene, is a wonderful example of this artistic genre. A second curtain is on display at the Westport Grange #181.



Grangers followed elaborate and secret rituals, theatrical in nature. These peculiar masks known as hoodwinks were worn by new candidates during the initiation ceremony to symbolize primeval darkness and ignorance. The masks were removed mid-way through the ceremony to bring the members “into the light.” “Courage, then, and patience, when gloom broods over your pathway. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. To the upright there ariseth light in darkness, and the path of the righteous shineth brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day.”



This ballot box was used to vote on the acceptance of new members. Its ingenious design enabled Grangers to vote with anonymity. The ballot box had two compartments. White squares and black balls were in one compartment. Each member thrust their hand into the compartment, chose either a white square (a vote in favor) or a black ball (a vote against) and pushed it through a small opening into the other compartment.

where you could bring in your different vegetables and compete for prizes. It was a form of entertainment and community help. The social life of the community centered around the Grange at the time. As a matter of fact, the Grange dances here were on Tuesday nights, the dances at the Watuppa Grange were on Saturday night and the Acushnet Grange dances were on Thursday. I went to them all. I went dancing a lot.” Carlton “Cukie” Macomber, a 19-year-old Grange Master in 1947, recalls the Tuesday night square dances held at No. 181:

“During the war with rationing nobody had extra gas to go to movies or such. We had to have a place to go and the Grange was it. I met my little woman at a Grange dance.”

An undated newspaper article captures the attachment that many old-timers felt towards the Grange. Alice Manchester, a faithful granger for more than 50 years, explained how the Grange linked her to “the green earth and the growth of beauty.” Our project to delve into the history of the Grange — its buildings, archives, and artifacts — has connected us to a smaller, more localized world, reliant on in-person connections forged between farmers and fueled by dances.

With special thanks to Barbara Smith, President of the Westport Grange #181 and Sam Manley, Grange historian.

View more images and videos at www.wpthistory.org/2023/07/westport-grange-history/



MOVE OVER BARBIE

GI JOE[®]

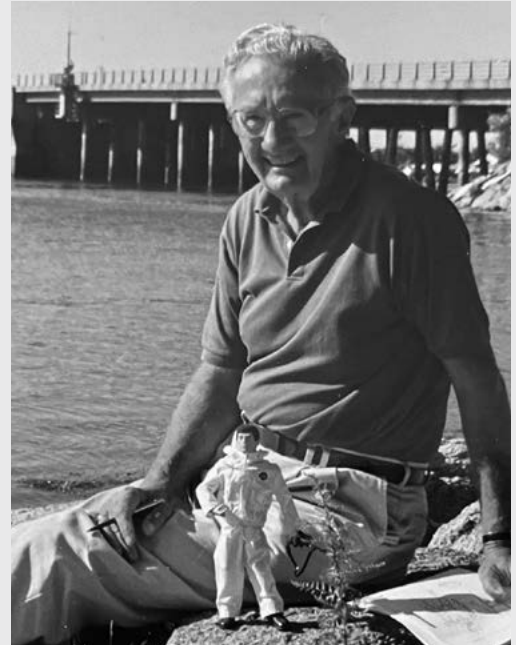
IS WESTPORT'S TOY STORY

In the wake of the recently released movie “Barbie,” it seems timely to highlight another well-known toy — one with Westport connections — whose creator found inspiration at the annual Westport Friends book sale and Grundy’s Hardware Store (now known as Ace Hardware). The concept of this action figure was synthesized by the mind of a Westport summer resident, Sam Speers. Al Lees, President of the Westport Historical Society, has fond memories of Sam and his wife Arlene, who spent their summers at Masquesatch Meadows. A GI Joe action figure is among Al’s treasured mementos of childhood:

“As a child, I like many of my generation had very few toys. They were simply too expensive. However, one Christmas, I opened the “big” present and there “he” was, GI Joe in a footlocker with all of his regalia. I will never forget that day. Now it’s tough to play soldier with only one soldier, but luckily Andrew and Peter Kirkaldy, two of my very best friends also got GI Joes. Now that was a game changer! We would play for hours fighting imaginary battles in the room next to Dr. Kirkaldy’s medical office, which at the time was in his house. I cannot imagine what his patients heard! Years later, I had the distinct pleasure of becoming friends with Sam and Arlene Speers. I remember sitting in my mother’s living room with the Speers and hearing about how GI Joe came to be. Rarely do childhood dreams become adult realities. This was certainly one of those times. Thank you Sam and GI Joe.”

Speers (1924 – 2018) was a World War II veteran, having served two years as an airplane mechanic in the Navy. He then attended Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), where he graduated in 1950 with a degree in industrial design. By 1963, he was working for Hasbro in Providence, and divided his time between a home in Attleboro and a cottage at Masquesatch Meadows. He was one of several on a Hasbro team challenged to create a “doll” for boys (but under instructions to never refer to it as a “doll”) and among the first to develop the concept of an action figure - a soldier - dubbed GI Joe.

Speers found inspiration for GI Joe at several Westport locations. The design required innovative use of materials for special movable joints. At Grundy’s Hardware Store in Westport, he discovered a ring-threaded screw: “it has concentric rings that can be forced into something but cannot be twisted out easily. Bingo. By Monday morning Norman Jacques and Walter Hansen, the other men on my team, were using them to fasten the fighting man’s limbs together.” (Interview with Speers by Paul Tamburello)



Sam Speers



GI Joe footlocker

Speers was responsible for the ongoing evolution of stories and designs for GI Joe. Ironically, he found inspiration for GI Joe's exploits at the annual Westport Friends book sale, picking up old issues of National Geographic which shaped his vision for the action figure. Speers may have found inspiration for deep-sea diver GI Joe within the pages of these magazines. With weighted boots and a special hard hat, deep-sea GI Joe would sink when tossed into water and could be brought back to the surface by blowing through a small tube. Speers' imagination sent GI Joe on a hunt for a white tiger, brought him face-to-face with a giant octopus, and sent him to the moon.

Speers recalled a proud moment in the 1970s at Westport Harbor: “One of the thrills of my life was when my wife and I boated past Boat Beach and saw a little boy and his mother leaning over the side of a boat and dropping the deep sea GI Joe into the water. It was something I thought I’d never see.” (Interview with Speers by Paul Tamburello)

As GI Joe approaches its 70th anniversary in 2024, Westporters can proudly reflect upon this “sleepy” rural town’s role in inspiring a toy that remains a cultural icon of child’s play.

Sources for this article include:

<https://ptatlarge.typepad.com/ptatlarge/2011/10/a-toy-story-from-westport-ma.html>

<https://www.southcoasttoday.com/story/lifestyle/1997/07/16/the-genius-behind-gi-joe/50604013007/>





Westport Historical Society 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

Thank you to:

BOARD MEMBERS

President: Al Lees III

Vice President: Yvonne Barr

Treasurer: Cindy Brown

Clerk: Elizabeth White

Charley Appleton

Charles “Buzzy” Baron

Stephen Fletcher

Sean Leach

Sam Manley

Laura Raposa

Katrina Strozik

A special thank you to:

HANDY HOUSE DOCENTS:

Peggy Aulisio

Ruth Bourns

Denise Bolduc

Dawn Houliker

Alice Huff

Nancy Mailhot

Mary Ries

Ray Shaw, graphic designer

Terry Somerson, Halloween team leader and Halloween volunteers

Todd Baptista and Betty Slade for their assistance organizing the Cemetery Tour

Blair Walker, guest curator

Sugar Broughton, Emily Hoeffel, Dale Weber, Joanne Demarco, and George Whitley, our Artisan Fair team

Artisan Fair volunteers

Cemetery Tour volunteers

Westport Gravestone Cleaning and Restoration Group



Some highlights of the year:

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Our year-round offerings of public programs and lectures covered a wide range of themes. Steve Fletcher, VP Bonhams-Skinner, entertained a large audience with tales of unexpected discoveries, the Little League baseball team reunited to relive their victory in 1964. We gathered at the scenic Mill Pond Conservation Area to explore the history of mills at the Head of Westport. Grange History Day and French-Canadian Families of Westport provided community-led forums to share stories, photographs and memorabilia. Our year ended with the fabulous storytelling by Westport's swordfish boat captains and some Halloween-themed Old House Ghost Stories.



STORIES IN STONE CEMETERY TOUR

Visitors flocked to view some of Westport's historic cemeteries during a special tour held on June 10. The tour provided access to 8 private family cemeteries, embracing the diverse and connected life stories of Quakers, Mayflower passenger descendants, Native Americans, African Americans, military veterans, and of families that have been embedded in our community for generations. The tour also highlighted the efforts of the Westport Gravestone Cleaning and Restoration group. Members of the public enjoyed live demonstrations of gravestone restoration techniques. The tour raised over \$10,000, attracted 200 visitors and engaged 40 volunteers. Stories from the cemeteries can be viewed at www.wpthistory.org/blog/.



HANDY HOUSE

Activities at the Handy House continue to expand and evolve. Summer/fall events included:

• *Bonnets, Bustles, and Bloomers*

Our summer exhibition, creatively curated by Blair Walker, presented the changing shapes and silhouettes of 19th-century fashion, and explored the form and function of corsets, bustles, bloomers, petticoats, and bonnets. Visitors enjoyed curator-led tours and the presentations of "Undressed," a layer-by-layer disrobing of a mannequin. Our thanks to Blair Walker for her expertise and artistic talents!

• *Kids Make History*

Families connected to local history and enjoyed uniquely creative hands-on activities offered throughout the summer, such as making a cornhusk doll, scavenger hunts, and paper doll making.



• *Halloween Heroes at the Handy House!*

Our annual Halloween event attracted 250 individuals, expertly managed by Terry Somerson and our magical team of volunteer witches. The Halloween Trail, open for the entire month of October, enticed many families into the woods and received significant attention on social media. This program was supported by a grant from the Westport Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust administered by the Bank of America.

• *Handy House Artisan Fair*

Now in its 10th year, the Artisan Fair is a celebration of Westport's community of traditional craftspeople and vibrant appreciation of local heritage. This year's event offered an array of 35 local artisans, with the addition of a collector's corner and an expanded Vintage Market. The Artisan Fair was generously supported by a grant from the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, through its Festivals and Projects Program. This grant signifies that Westport Historical Society provides significant public value through its programs and services.

Winter exhibition: Retro Perspective: Panoramic Vistas from Westport's Past

This exhibition showcased 22 historical panoramic views of Westport, presenting astonishing expansive visions of the landscape as well as fascinating tiny details of everyday life. Covering locations from Westport Factory, the Head of Westport and Westport Point to the Harbor, these images revealed Westport as it appeared in the early 1900s — on the cusp of modernity, but still very much frozen in the horse and buggy era. The display formed an extraordinary visual document. Special thanks to David Jones, Ken Simon, and Ray Shaw for their assistance with aspects of this exhibition.

School-based programs

2023 was an informative year for our school-based education programs! Our annual Paul Cuffe Birthday Celebration took place in January at the Westport Elementary School with Cuffe descendant Robert Cox and educator Marilyn Packard-Luther presenting the stories of his inspiring life to grades 1-4. The annual 3rd Grade Tour of Westport took place at Handy House, both in June and November for different school years. Students learned about the history and architecture of the house and its inhabitants through hands-on and interactive experiences (drawing water from the well continues to be a favorite activity for the third graders). All activities are tied to their classroom learning; simple machines, engineering, visual thinking strategies, and science are some of the academic areas touched upon. Special thanks to our docents Sarah Gifford, Maryann Goulart, Alice Huff, Nancy Mailhot, and Marilyn Packard-Luther for helping us share our local history with the students throughout the year!





In Search of a New Land

The Historical Society sponsored a performance of a new play about Paul Cuffe. *In Search of New Land* by New York-based playwright Samuel Harps offers new perspectives to inform our understanding of Paul Cuffe whose struggles and achievements as a person of African American and Native American descent in early 19th century New England continue to resonate today. Our thanks to Round the Bend Farm for hosting this event.

Westport Gravestone Cleaning and Restoration Group

The Westport Gravestone Cleaning and Restoration Group has worked in 19 different cemeteries, repairing over 250 gravestones and cleaning over 2,000 more. The team completed the remaining work at Westport Point which totaled 45 monuments. The Jedediah Allen, Sherman Family, Silas Kirby, Ezekiel Brownell, Booth-Tripp-Cory, Tripp Family, Howland-Cole, Wood-Wing, Charlotte White, and Gammons Cornell family cemeteries were all cleaned and the gravestones repaired and restored. Repairs and cleaning also took place at Beech Grove, Linden Grove and Maple Grove. Over a thousand stones at Linden Grove Cemetery were resprayed with D/2 biological solution this summer and the team completed a resurvey of high, moderate and low priority repairs in that graveyard where 242 stones have already been restored. The final high priority repairs will be completed this fall as weather permits. A full survey of the Babcock-Gifford-Wordell Cemetery on Blossom Road has been completed where 28 of the 58 stones will require repairs. This project is scheduled for the spring of 2024. Our team is appreciative of the support we have received from our volunteer crew and are actively seeking new volunteers for gravestone cleaning and those interested in learning the restoration process in the future. Submitted by Todd Baptista.



COLLECTIONS

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

2023.001 Materials relating to the Southard property at Westport Point. Donated by Stephen Ernst.

2023.006 Documents relating to the Sherman family of Westport. Donated by Marc Deshaies.



2023.009 Photographs of the Manchester property and family at Westport Harbor. Donated by Edith Peckham.

2023.017 Painting of dunes by Mercy Etta Baker. Donated by Al Lees.

2023.018 Documents relating to the history of Stacia's Restaurant and Gooseberry Island. Donated by Janet Donati.

2023.029 Little League baseball team jacket. Donated by Stephen Pettey.

2023.034 Westport High School yearbooks. Donated by Dora Kirby.

2023.036 Deeds and documents relating to the Wood family. Donated by Jim Faria.

2023.042 Deeds and documents relating to Jacob Allen, Hannah Coggeshall and Joshua Potter. Donated by Jim Faria.

2023.044 Dartmouth land sale from Abner Wood to Nathaniel Shaw, 1778. Donated by Deirdre Barone.

2023.045 Photographs of sword-fishing activities in Westport. Donated by Richie Earle and Everett Mills.

2023.048 Photos of the property and businesses of the Famalette, Lefebvre & Greenhalgh families on Route 6. Donated in memory of Famalette, Lefebvre & Greenhalgh families.





New life for the Bell School as the Westport History Center

The next phase of work on the Bell School is underway! Our vision for the future of the Bell School is as a “history center” - a hybrid space combining elements of a visitor/information center/museum/library - offering resources for residents/researchers/ tourists to learn more about Westport’s history and providing space and a stable environment for preserving our collection of historical archives and objects. The most significant outcomes of the project will be:

- A dedicated and expanded storage for our collection of archives and objects by fully utilizing the basement and second floor.
- A welcoming and comfortable visitor center on the first floor providing access to research facilities and interpretive displays.
- Securing the structural integrity of this historic building for many years to come.

By reimagining the use of the first floor, the Bell School will be transformed into an engaging community resource, providing a more dynamic and welcoming visitor experience. The reconfigured public space on the first floor will offer:

- Small-scale, changing displays of historical objects.
- Resources for researchers including most commonly used documents, maps, photos.
- A comfortable community documentation space for promoting interaction and engagement with visitors, for example conducting oral history interviews.
- Space for processing and cataloging the collection by volunteers and staff.
- By relocating the office and research facilities on the first floor, staff will be able to more easily assist and interact with visitors.

Fundraising is ongoing! Please contact Westport Historical Society for current fundraising needs.

BALANCE SHEET

September 30, 2023

Current Assets

Cash	\$253,745*
Bell School rehabilitation fund	\$70,225
Accounts receivable	\$53,300
Sylvan Endowment	\$120,533
Board designated endowment	\$405,558
Handy House restricted funds	\$238,416

Total Assets **\$1,141,777**

Liabilities

Total current liabilities	\$1,137
Total equity	\$1,140,640

Total liabilities and assets **\$1,141,777**

(Please note that our fiscal year is Oct 1 to Sep 30)

*includes an emergency reserve fund and a bequest

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

(Operating expenses including Bell School project)

October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

Revenue and support

Direct Public Support	\$301,400*
Special events	\$ 11,190
Grants	\$ 18,600
Investment transfers	\$ 51,529
Other	\$ 1,296

Total Revenue and support **\$384,015**

Expenses

Contract Services	\$52,872
	(includes Bell School project)
Facilities	\$6,804
Utilities	\$2,431
Operations	\$26,815
Program	\$2,964
Other	\$15,731
Payroll	\$73,152

Total Expenses **\$180,769**

Thank you!

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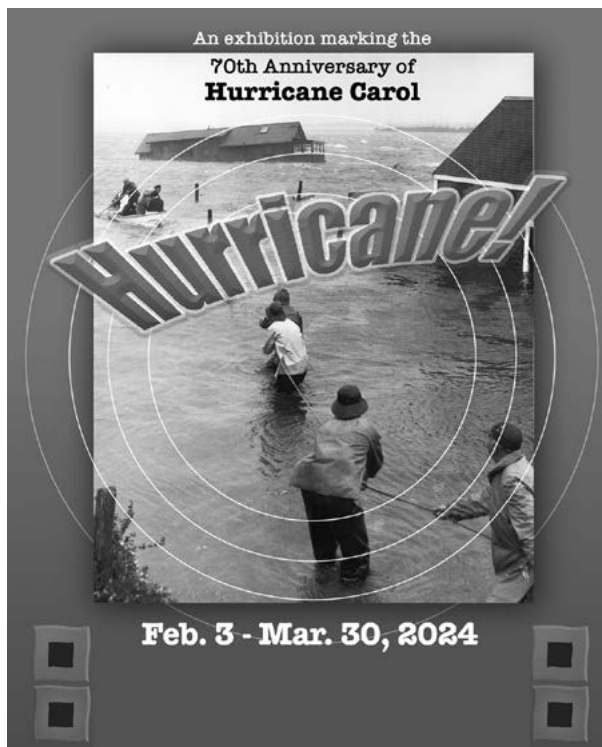
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Exhibition of images of Hurricane Carol
Westport Public Library
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