

Westbrook Historical Society

"A Society That Preserves the Past"

Spring 2012

Purpose:

The Westbrook Historical Society meets regularly in its rooms at the Community Center at 426 Bridge Street, Westbrook at 1:30 pm on the first Wednesday of each month.

The purpose of the Society is to bring together those people interested in the history of Westbrook, and to discover, collect, and preserve any materials and objects which establish and illustrate the history of the area.

OPEN HOUSE AND RIBBON CUTTING



Mayor Colleen Hilton hands a pair of scissors to Ellie Saunders, 91, a founding member of the Westbrook Historical Society, for a ribbon-cutting ceremony Wednesday at the society's new home in the Fred C. Wescott Building.

Photo by Sean Murphy

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is here and I am happy to report that our move from the Dunn Street Legion Hall to the Community Center has been completed. I am grateful to all of our Members that volunteered their time and energy to make our move successful.

Special Thanks goes to Alan Bickford and Phil Morse of the Community Center Maintenance Staff. Alan and Phil went above and beyond, often on their own time to prepare our space and help us set up our collection.

On Wednesday, March 7, 2012 we hosted an open house from 5:00 to 9:00 P.M. in our new home and Ellie Saunders did us the honor of cutting the Ribbon with the assistance of Mayor Colleen Hilton, City Council President Brendon Rielly and City Councilor John O'Hara.

We have been welcomed into the Community Center with open arms by Director Maria Dorn and her Staff and they have said that the Historical Society is the highlight of the Community Center.

We just recently got our phone and computer hookup complete and I want to give special thanks to Norm & Donna Conley for maintaining our Website and forwarding inquiries while out of State on vacation.

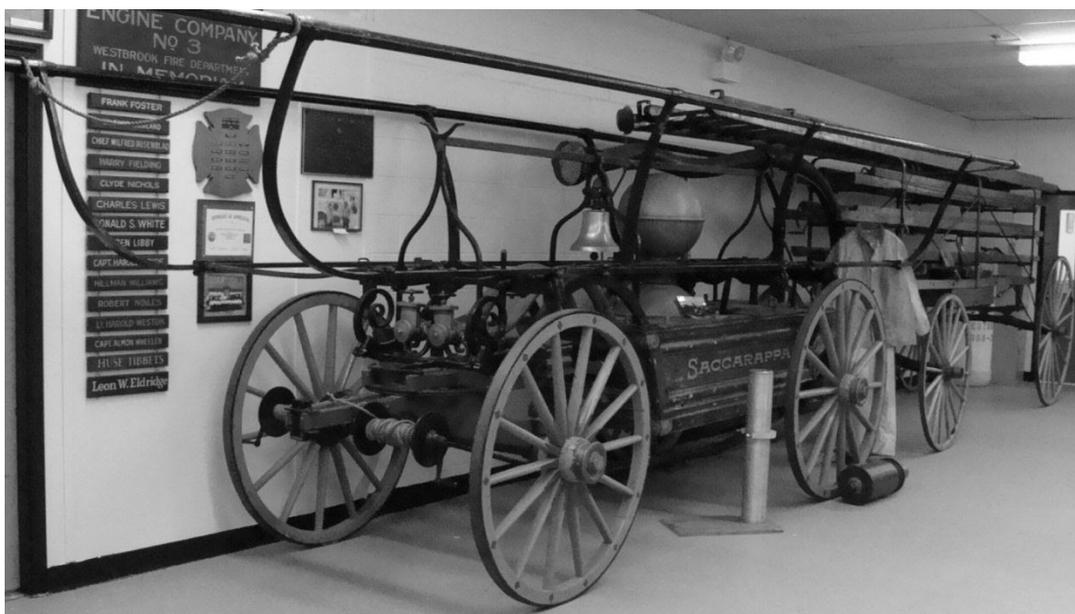
Special Thanks also to Suzan Norton for stepping up and working with the Conley's to process inquiries and also log in recent articles that have been donated to the Society.

Special Thanks also to Andrea Vasquez for setting up and managing our facebook site.

And last but not least a Big Thank You to Martha Brackett for taking over the very challenging job of producing our quarterly newsletter, "Thanks Martha."

We have a great new home and I look forward to seeing you there.

Mike Sanphy, President



March 7, 2012 –Grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the museum’s new home at the Fred C. Wescott Community Center with over one hundred attending. The Society, which was founded in 1975, displays a treasure trove of clothing, dishes, old equipment such as the antique fire engine shown above, photographs, maps, old records and many other artifacts of Westbrook history.

The Society started in one room at the old Westbrook High School and then moved to the second floor of the American Legion Hall. We have been busy setting up our new rooms in the Community Center after the move in January. The space consists of a large open room with the various reference materials and displays plus another room that will house the office work area and meeting space.

HIGHLAND LAKE SCHOOL 1948

There was a schoolhouse at Duck Pond (Highland Lake) at an early date. The school committee of district No. 6 reported to the selectmen that the old school at Duck Pond had been in an unsafe condition for several years and, in 1874, it was sold for \$10. It was replaced with a new two story building. Only the lower room was used for school purposes, the upper room being finished by the citizens residing in that vicinity for use as a public hall. The total cost of the building to the town, including the lot, basement and grading was about \$2,700. (*From Highlights of Westbrook History*)



1st Row: Laverne Meehan, Shirley Maley, Anne Marie Graffam, Ronald Graffam, David Graffam, Patricia Dearborn, Duane Cummings, Glenn Strout. 2nd Row: Jackie Sawyer, Joseph Cummings, Doreen Kershner, Rhoda Peterson, Roland Peterson, Norman Keene, Patricia Peterson, Carol Moody. 3rd Row: Jeri Strout, Robert Joy, William Adams.

The School was located on Duck Pond Road behind the present day Highland Variety Store on the corner of Bridgton Road and Duck Pond Road. It was hit by lightning and destroyed in 1969 after fire swept through it. Robert G. Fortin Furniture Company was the last occupant of the building using it for furniture storage.



The teacher for many years in this one room schoolhouse, handling grades sub-primary to sixth was **Verna Jones**. She taught school for 42 years with 36 of them in Westbrook.

Contact Information: info@westbrookhistoricalsociety.org Telephone 207-854-5588
Officers: President- Mike Sanphy , Vice President- Roberta Wyer Dutton Morrill , Secretary- Andrea Pacillo Vasquez, Treasurer- Nancy Joy Curran
Open Saturday and Tuesday mornings from 9 am to noon.

Our website: www.westbrookhistoricalsociety.org – gives a fascinating outline of the Collection, Research Library and Exhibitions of the Society, much too much to be listed in this newsletter. To begin, perhaps you would like to read The Narragansett Sun, a local newspaper for the interior towns of Cumberland and York County, which published The History of Westbrook in May of 1895 which is available on this website. Much genealogical information is contained in this story. Another aid to genealogy is the Westbrook Cemeteries listing of names and dates on all the stones and the Society also keeps current a list of Westbrook deaths and obituaries.

UPCOMING EVENTS: April 4 – 1:30 pm Monthly Meeting & Program – 2:30 pm Thomaston Galleries Appraisal Day – Members may bring ONE item for appraisal.
May 2 – 1:30 pm Monthly Meeting & Program - Bill Norbert –Westbrook Quakers-Hall Family
June 6 – 1:30 pm ANNUAL MEETING

Martha Brackett - Newsletter Editor

WESTBROOK HISTORY CONTEST –

Entries must be submitted to the Westbrook Historical Society by May 1, 2012. Adult and Student entry levels. 1st prize \$50 plus 1 year membership, 2nd prize \$25 plus 1 year membership. Winners announced at Westbrook Together Days in June 2012. Anyone is eligible to enter but entries **MUST be about Westbrook.**

Details on web site at info@westbrookhistoricalsociety.org.



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