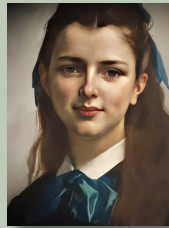




PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE



Cornelia Warren at 14 painted in France in 1871 by French painter Alexander Cabanel.



Over a century after Cornelia Warren’s passing, the Westbrook community continues to benefit from her generosity. The latest comes as a grant request to the **Nathan Harris House** (pictured left) that was donated to the **Westbrook Historical Society** in 2023 according to the wishes of the late Ray Pallas by his surviving family members.

The **Cornelia Warren Community Association** board of directors graciously approved \$100,000 of the initial request toward renovation costs. The work is scheduled to begin within the next month. An additional \$200,000 still needs to be raised to complete most of the work. When completed, the Harris House will be a museum and a historical learning center for the community.

The Nathan Harris House, built around 1830 on Main Street in Westbrook, holds historical significance. In 1993, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places in Cumberland County. Nathan Harris himself was a respected merchant in his time. Sadly, in 1835, his wife Rebecca passed away at the age of thirty-five, leaving him to raise their children. Harris died twelve years later in Cape Elizabeth, at the home of Dr. Buzzell. Aaron Quinby, another prominent citizen of Westbrook, took on the role of the legal guardian for the Harris children.

It’s exciting to know that the Historical Society is actively researching the Harris family, and this information will eventually become part of the exhibit once the house renovations are completed and it opens to the public. This will provide valuable insights into the history of the area and the lives of its prominent residents.

The beautiful murals on the right are an example of the artwork that is on the walls. They will eventually be cleaned by a special process that will restore them to their original appearance.

The Nathan Harris House is looking for period furniture circa 1830. If you can help please contact *Deb Shangraw* at shangrawd@outlook.com



From The President



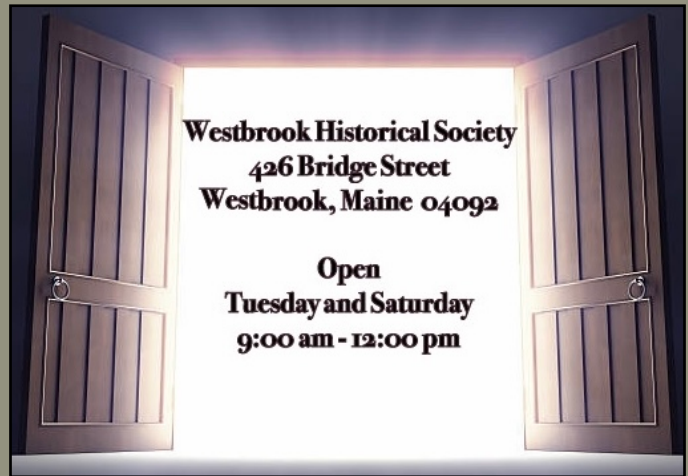
I want to bring you up to date on some exciting changes that we have been making.

We recently updated some of our older computer equipment, software, and other hardware items. The new HP laptop, coupled with the powerful CZUR scanner, will improve the old flatbed scanner as we prepare to begin a new phase of scanning photos and scrapbooks into digital format.

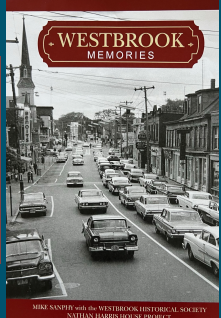
We also purchased a new web creation program and FTP software to prepare for a complete makeover of the Historical Society web page beginning in 2024. We plan on having a secure online store to make purchasing products with a credit card and the ability to pay dues easier.

Thanks to our new Ancestry account, digging deeper into historical records is now easier.

We are growing and want you to come along with us. There will be opportunities for you to help, too. Stay tuned. ...Mike



Mike's new book "Westbrook Memories." is now at the publisher for the first printing. Some missed his first book because they waited too long to purchase one. We will announce it via email and on social media as soon as it is available.



MIKE SANDER'S NEW WESTBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NATHAN HARRIS HOUSE PROJECT



The original sign hanging on the building in this picture that was located on Fitch Street is now on display at the historical society. A reporter once asked Oscar George King Robinson what O.G.K. stood for. "Only God Knows," he responded with a wink and a smile.



O.G. K. Robinson



The Westbrook Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax-deductible.





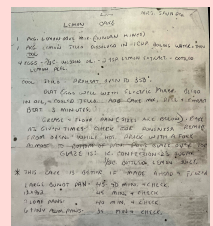
Diane Dyer stands beside the wedding dress display of *Miss Ella M. Melcher*. Ella married *Leonard C. Holston* on July 1, 1898, at her mother's house in Cumberland Mills under a beautiful floral arch surrounded by greenery and plants. They later lived on Lawrence Street in Westbrook, where they celebrated their 50th anniversary in 1948. Our collection includes a 1960s paper dress, a vintage ladies' bathing suit, and hat from the late 1800s, an ocelot coat, baby shoes, clothing, and christening outfits. If you have any vintage clothing that you would like to donate, stop in and see Diane at the Westbrook, Maine Historical Society, 426 Bridge Street, or call 207-854-5588

In the Fall of 1990, *Kj Rogers* first heard about **Ellie Saunder's famous lemon cake**. She just started a new job with the Westbrook Fire Department and was told that once a year and without fail, Ellie would bring one along with other goodies to all of the fire stations where all shifts would fight for a piece of it. No one could remember if she had ever been given a thank you card, so *Kj* bought one. After everyone signed it, she, along with a few others from the department, drove over to Ellie's and gave the card to her, telling her how much everyone enjoyed the cake and looked forward to it each year. *Kj* told Ellie about baking every lemon cake recipe available, trying to duplicate it but couldn't. "What's your secret ingredient?" she asked. "Well, dear. Let me go get out for you." Ellie returned with not one but three recipes. One was for the lemon cake; the others were for her pistachio cake and carrot pineapple bread. They were the three that she would bake and drop off every year, and as good as they all were, the lemon cake was everyone's favorite. She copied the recipes by hand and gave them to *Kj*. We now have them and will share them in upcoming newsletters. As an honor to Ellie, we hope you will always refer to it as **Mrs. Saunders Lemon Cake**, as it has been for over thirty years. You will enjoy a great dessert and taste a piece of history. Enjoy!

Kj says she uses 2 tsp of bottled lemon peel. (If you cannot find it, 2 tbsp of fresh lemon zest can be substituted since it is not as strong.)



Mrs. Saunders



Lemon Cake

1 pkg Lemon Cake mix (Duncan Hines)

1 pkg Lemon Jello dissolved in 1cup boiling water then cool.

4 eggs - 2/3 cup Wesson oil - 2 tsp lemon extract - bottled lemon peel.

Cool Jello. Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Beat eggs well with electric mixer. Blend in oil and cooled Jello. Add cake mix, peel & extract. Beat three minutes.

Grease & flour pan (sizes are below)

Bake at given times - check for doneness - remove from oven. While hot prick with fork almost to the bottom of pan. Pour glaze over top.

Glaze is: 1c confectioner's sugar and 1/2c bottled lemon juice.

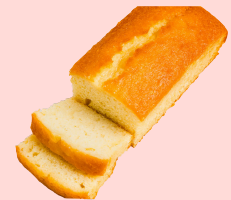
* This cake is better if made ahead and frozen

Large bundt pan - 45-50 minutes. Check

13x9x2 - 45 minutes and check

2 loaf pans - 40 minutes and check

6 tiny aluminum pans - 35 minutes and check



Share a Recipe

Do you have a special family recipe that you would like to share with our members? If so please send it to us at:

westhistorical@myfairpoint.net

Autumn is the time for picking apples. Years ago in the 40's, *Lewis and Anna Turgeon* grew apples in their Springbrook Orchard on 334 Spring Street. They were one of the many French families who migrated from Quebec, Canada. *Jackie and Bob Grondin* grew up on Twin Falls Farm on the other side of the orchard. They recall that the *Turgeons* were good neighbors and let them pick apples for their family. Today, you will find Ed's Batteries on that site. ...Tom Clarke



Saying Goodbye to Guidi's Diner





Artt Frank

The voice on the other end of my cellphone was strong; its timbre and articulation were perfect for a cartoon voiceover or commercial. It is hard to believe that it belongs to 90-year-old **Artt Frank**, a former resident of Westbrook. If you grew up here during the 50s and 60s, you probably heard his name and maybe something about him.

Artt was born on March 9, 1933, in a house on *Walker Street, also known as Scotch Hill*. He was one of seven children. The family's journey led them to live at the *Bee Hive House* on Brown Street, overlooking the famous *Black Bridge* along the *Presumpscott River*. Eventually, they settled into a small apartment at #5 Webb Street, a mere five-minute walk from his birthplace. The Frank family faced many financial hardships. The boys shared shoes and patched the holes in them with cardboard. Scarlet Fever left their father unable to work. Help

arrived in the form of a knock on their door, as the Salvation Army brought them three boxes of food, an act of generosity that Artt never forgot. To this day, when he sees a Salvation Army kettle, he drops in a few dollars. "Times were tough," he says, "but we were always together." One thing that has sustained him over the years is prayer and faith that grew from a seed planted in him by visits to the *Warren Congregational Church* on Main Street in Westbrook.

In 1953, Artt's life took a profound turn. On his way home from North Korea, he heard a radio trumpet performance by the legendary **Chet Baker** that touched his soul deeply. He prayed that he would be able to meet him someday. That prayer was answered in a way that Artt could never have imagined. Later he ended up playing drums alongside Baker in various jazz clubs along the East Coast. Despite the rampant drug culture in the jazz scene at the time Artt's steadfast faith shielded him from becoming another victim. Unfortunately, it was not so for Chet Baker. In hindsight, he sees Chet, with all of his talent and followers, as a "lonely soul in need of a friend." And in Artt, Baker found a deep and lasting friendship. Although Chet often traveled and performed with different musicians he cherished Artt's presence, friendship and musicianship. "Artt Frank is my all-time favorite drummer. He always seems to know where I'm going."



Chet Baker

Artt ventured into the world of acting upon his arrival in Hollywood. He stopped at **Rudy Vallee's** residence, where he hoped for a warm welcome and assistance from a fellow former Westbrook resident. Instead, he found himself painting a few rooms for the "Vagabond Lover." He was able to find some minor acting roles as an extra, eagerly sharing the news with family and friends back home. However, the initial joy turned to disappointment when he realized his parts didn't make it into the final film cut. Nevertheless, he received a paycheck for his efforts. His ultimate goal was success and bringing pride to his family. Many only dream of leaving their comfort zone, taking risks, and pursuing their dreams, but Artt did just that.



Artt Frank

Artt and Chet remained close friends, occasionally performing together in clubs. When Artt was back in Maine in 1975 and living in Windham with his wife and children, Chet and his family surprised him by visiting with them and ended up staying four months. Chet would sometimes leave to perform in clubs across the U.S. and abroad. One of the Maine highlights was when Artt and Chet performed together at the *Dunphy Sheraton Hotel* in South Portland in front of family and friends.

Artt took Chet on a tour of Westbrook, driving through familiar streets like Walker Street, passing the old ball field at St. Hyacinth, Webb Street, and the house where he grew up. They also visited the Portland Headlight at Cape Elizabeth, admiring the old lighthouse. Chet was captivated by the serene scene, saying that he could stay there forever. A few days later, he craved a powdered jelly doughnut and, following Artt's directions, drove to the Dunkin' Donuts on Main Street in Westbrook. The person who waited on him had no idea who he was.

Chet Baker's tragic and suspicious death while performing overseas in Amsterdam on May 13, 1998, deeply affected Artt. They had spoken on the phone just the night before. Artt cherished their bond, likening it to a love stronger than that of brothers.



Artt Frank with Chet Baker
Artt and Chet

Artt lives in Arizona with his wife, Lisa. He is dealing with serious health issues that prevents him from return to Maine for a visit. "I truly miss my hometown, Westbrook, the greatest little city in the world. My heart will always be there," he says with a hint of sadness. When I asked him how he'd like to be remembered, his response was unwavering: "I played with the world's greatest lyrical trumpeter. I may not be a household name by any means, but I'm known by a few important people, and that's enough for me. That's making it. Making it means having friends and loved ones. That's true stardom." Thirty-five years after Baker's passing, Artt's life still remains intertwined with his, spending more time talking about his dear friend than himself.

People often wonder about the double "t" in Artt's first name. It's a result of Chet Baker's mix-up. He had several contacts named "Art" and kept dialing the wrong one. To avoid confusion, he added a second "t" to Artt's name and it stuck ever since.

Artt's remarkable career spans 75 years, collaborating with legendary musicians such as *Charlie "Bird" Parker*, *Miles Davis*, and "one memorable night with *Billie Holiday*," in addition to his association with jazz trumpet icon Chet Baker. He spends time reflecting on his decades of experiences. He has no regrets. In the quiet evenings, he finds solace in the music of him and Chet Baker playing in the background, and reminiscing about his long-gone friend and his distant hometown of Westbrook.

For Artt and Chet. ... *Mark Swett*

To listen to a recording of Artt Frank and Chet Baker playing live click on the picture



Technology has opened up exciting possibilities for exploring and enhancing historical photographs. Software that can sharpen and colorize old images can reveal details that might have been missed in the originals, breathing new life into them. However, not everyone embraces these advancements, similar to the debate around classic movies being digitized and colorized. The photo on the top left with the red border has been enhanced and sharpened. If you crop and enlarge it, you can see a boy kneeling on the cement stairs looking inside the pool room window. The 1914 photo on the middle left, scanned from a glass plate negative and then colorized and enlarged, showcases incredible details. We suggest using a good-quality magnifying glass when viewing old pictures. It can provide a unique and immersive experience, almost like stepping into the past with a 3D effect, which digital enlargements can't replicate. These enhancements and explorations by the Historical Society are invaluable in preserving and sharing the past with the public. ...Mark Swett



WHAT'S NEW!

Henry Hutchins Addition To Our Collection

WHAT'S NEW!



George Springer with jeweler Henry Hutchins and James Pearson

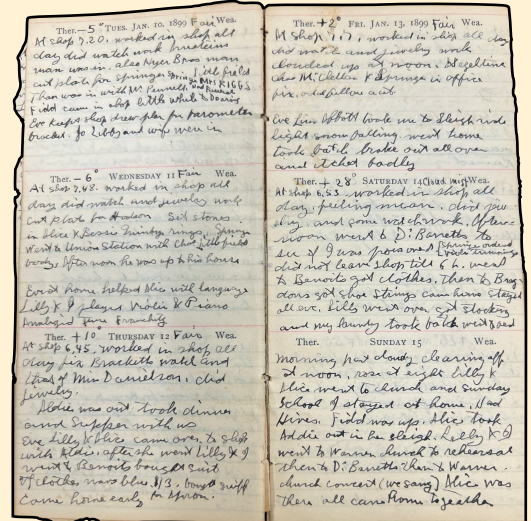


Pencil Drawing



Leather Diary

From Your Friend Henry M. Hutchins Jan 3rd 1881



Diary Sample



Unknown Woman

Henry M. Hutchins
Watchmaker, Jeweler
and Engraver

845 MAIN STREET, WESTBROOK, MAINE
Repairing in all Its Branches Promptly
and Satisfactorily Done

Newspaper Ad

Westbrook, Maine Historical Society Bucket Brigade

Fire Safety Dogs

Remembering Aspen



Introducing Grace



The children once taught by *Aspen* have all grown into adults, with many of them now having children and even grandchildren of their own. They cherish the memories of *Aspen's* visits to their school classrooms, not just for the joy of being petted, but for the valuable lessons she taught them about fire safety.

Aspen's journey began when she was just four years old and continued until the year 2000. *Debbie King*, her owner and trainer, brought her to Portugal in 1999 and 2000 where she initiated educational programs at a school for handicapped and mentally challenged adults. The rough-coat collie brought smiles to many of their faces.

After her passing, *Aspen* was cremated, and a portion of her ashes were brought back to Portugal where they were scattered over the school grounds where she had once taught. Some were also sprinkled atop the summit of Mt. Washington. The remainder are in an urn in the house where she shared her life with her owner. *Aspen* left some big paw prints to fill and continues to hold a special place in *Debbie's* heart.

After twenty-five years, a new *Fire Safety Dog* has arrived in town, and she goes by the name *Grace* (pronounced Gracy). She's a five-year-old smooth-coat collie hailing from North Carolina. Her litter theme was centered around none other than *Elvis Presley*, with her name paying homage to *Graceland*.

Her owner and handler, *Debbie King*, reports that *Grace* is thriving, excelling in her performances, loves children, and displays a keen enthusiasm for learning new tricks. After a brief maternity break earlier this year, during which she birthed a litter of puppies, *Grace* is now back in training.

Grace was the star on a *Westbrook Together Days* float this year, where the crowd cheered her and shouted her name. The lessons she teaches and demonstrates to children are very important and can be life-saving. Among these critical lessons are *stop-drop-roll*, *crawling under smoke*, and *get out and stay out*.

On Saturday mornings, *Grace* frequently pays a visit to the *Bucket Brigade at the Westbrook Historical Society*.



Remembering Summers At The "Tank"



Ash Atherton
Pool Director



Opens June 18 - Closes Aug. 25

Swimming Ping Pong
Softball Baseball
Diving Cook-outs
Basketball Arts and Crafts
Water Polo Swimming Instruction
Coke - Candy - Chips

To all Boys and Girls:

We urge you all to enter our program this coming season. If you can't swim, we'll teach you.

Don't forget to pin your tags on and please leave all valuables at the Arts and Crafts building when you enter the pool.

See you all June 18th, the first day of registration. Registration is 50¢ for the entire 10-weeks' program.

To all Parents:

We have the equipment, the know-how and the personnel to enrich the life of your children this Summer. We extend to you and your family a cordial welcome to enjoy our facilities.

Please caution your children to be considerate of "their" playground and swimming pool equipment, as we have had to replace and repair windows, doors, locks and other materials that have been needlessly vandalized.

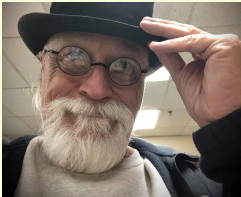
Lower your temperatures and raise your spirits! For ten weeks of fun, frolic and learning, come down to the pool this Summer.

Sincerely,
ASH ATHERTON
Director, W.C.A.

P.S. Swimming instruction starts June 25th. Schedules will be announced in daily paper later.



From The Editor



The Historical Society would like to thank *Martha Bracket* for her 10 years of service in creating the *Westbrook Historical Society Newsletter* that you have enjoyed. Anyone who has ever worked on one and published it knows that it is time-consuming to research and write stories of interest to share. But that is not the end of the process. Once completed, other people behind the scenes make it possible for you to receive it by regular mail or email. Thank you to *Tom Clarke* and *Rebecca Boaz* for their help distributing it. A big thank also goes to *Donna Connolly* for her years of work in maintaining our Internet site at <http://www.westbrookhistoricalsociety.org>. She has decided to step down from that position and has turned the reigns over to me. Next year, we will begin a complete makeover and will share more information with you as the work progresses.

If you enjoy writing this is an open invitation for you to submit a short article that you think our readers would enjoy. The only criteria is that it cannot be more than one page long and it has to be non-fiction and about Westbrook. You can send it to me at markroger1951@gmail.com

Note: If you are not receiving our newsletter by email we encourage you to do so if possible. Please let us know your email address and we will update our membership list.





Rosemary Holleman - Marian Sturtevant

For the last four years, **Marian Sturtevant** and her sidekick **Rosemary Holleman** have worked hard on preserving the records and pictures of the *Westbrook Woman's Club* dating back to 1919. The time and efforts are about to pay off. They are a few weeks away from completing the job. The yearbooks, handwritten secretary's notes, treasurer notes, awards, and plaques received over the years will finally be preserved, inventoried, and indexed for future generations.

To tackle a historical project such as the *Westbrook Woman's Club* takes time and dedication and is fueled by the spirit of volunteerism. Marian is no stranger to that. As a young woman, she was always willing to help with anything that needed to be done and would not let any obstacles stand in the way. She has never driven a car or missed a day of work, even though it often meant walking two or three miles down Gray Road to a bus stop if she didn't have a ride. It didn't matter if it was rain, shine, or cold and snow. Now - Marian

won't tell you, but we will. The impact of her work on behalf of the American Heart Association was so significant that they renamed their trophy after her.

The Westbrook Woman's Club started in 1919 with 21 members. Those early meetings were held in people's homes and had a strict dress code. The group grew to 200 members over the years. They worked out of the *Westbrook-Warren Congregational Church* on Main Street for thirty-two years. Today, there are 45 members and they meet at the *Westbrook Community Center* every first and third Tuesday in the *Spruce Room* from September through April. Marian's involvement with the Woman's Club came about by an invitation from friends at church. That was twelve years ago, and she hasn't stopped since. She is a past President, an honor member, a chairman of two committees, a co-chair of two, and the historian, an elected position with no term limits.


The Westbrook Woman's Club has significantly impacted the community and beyond. In 1978, they gathered together for a picnic in *Riverbank Park* without fanfare. From that tiny seed, *Westbrook Together Days* was born. Today, there are fifteen clubs in Maine. Every year, in the middle of October, they get together for a meeting. Of course, all of the clubs need financial support to continue their work, which requires coordination and someone to take charge of the efforts. And who is the fundraising chairman for the State of Maine? It is Marian Sturtevant.

Marian likes to say that she is from "old stock." She works quietly in the shadows, but the importance of her work speaks loudly. She knows what her mission is, and from the moment she walks through the doors of the historical society, she remains focused. If something special remains unfinished, she will bring the work home. She enjoys talking about the Woman's Club, and the Historical Society will be working with her so she can give a presentation at the Community Center very soon. Her presence will be felt in the future, too. She added contributions and information for the *Westbrook Time Capsule* that the city will open in 2114.

Marian is the first to say that the historic preservation she is devoted to is not about her. Her message to young people today is to "remember your early days, talk to your parents, find out things." She has restored records for decades to come. Her wish is for the spirit of volunteerism to touch everyone. That is where it begins - to see a need and to step in and do something about it. It doesn't cost anything but a bit of time. And before we forget, Marian Sturtevant is 97 years young! ...Mark Swett





On Sept. 6, 2023 noted author **Mark Alan Leslie** gave a very informative presentation about the Underground Railroad at the Westbrook Historical Society. **If you are on Facebook you can watch the video free on line by clicking on this picture.** 



The inspiring story below is of four men from Westbrook who bravely fought against the scourge of slavery, aiding slaves on their path to freedom, and is a testament to the power of courage, compassion, and justice. It should have a permanent place in our education system, ensuring that it is never forgotten and to inspire others to fight injustice wherever they find it.

An important piece of Westbrook history, that has been all but forgotten, is the Underground Railroad. Four well-known Westbrook citizens: Mr. Sewell Brackett, Captain Issac F. Quinby, Rev. Horace J. Bradbury, and Mr. John Brown, were part of this network to help enslaved people of color escape to freedom. Mr. Brackett carried on a stove and tinware business, Captain Quinby was a businessman dealing mostly in real estate, Rev. Bradbury was a Universalist Minister, and Mr. Brown was the station agent at the nearby Portland & Rochester Railroad Depot. These men all lived close to each other on Brackett Street.



Slaves were hidden in the attic of this building before continuing their journey to Canada and freedom.

In 1812, Zachariah Brackett built a large, brick house on Brackett Street with bricks from his brickyard at Prides Corner. This large house was often referred to as the Brackett Mansion.

In 1850, Mr. Brackett built a large, brick addition to his house to accommodate his son Sewell Brackett's thriving business of stoves, furnaces, and tinware. This addition was on the corner of Main and Brackett Street and faced Main Street. A dark space above the rafters over

the top floor of this building was used to hide and feed these slaves until connections were made for them to continue their flight to freedom.

Great care had to be taken to prevent noise as children were often among these people.

Mrs. Brackett could not figure out why her food was disappearing and often blamed it on her husband's young apprentices, which of course they denied. After the War, Mr. Brackett confessed that he was the culprit.

Fabius Ray was a lawyer, legislator, municipal court judge, and local historian. His wife Isabel Ray was also a local historian and in 1928 wrote of the activity above the top floor of Mr. Brackett's building. "If the walls of



Brackett Street from Main Street early 1900s.

this little dark room could speak, what tales they would tell of heartbreak, of terror, of despair and also of gratitude to these men of big hearts who were inviting certain censure if not hurt by helping these black men, women and children to a happier fate."

All traces of the Underground Railroad in Westbrook are now gone. The old Portland & Rochester Railroad station was sold to the Boston & Maine Railroad and closed in 1936. The old station was sold to Fred V. Turgeon of 249 Brown Street. The building was dismantled and moved to Brown Street. This station was not part of the Underground Railroad and replaced

an earlier station on this site. There are no known photos or drawings of that station. The Brackett Block was demolished by urban renewal.

The old railroad tracks are gone and William

Clarke Drive occupies their site. Westbrook Commons occupies Brackett Street.



Building demolition revealed the attic space where slaves stayed on their journey to freedom.

This operation was so secret that even the families of the four men carrying on this rescue work were in total ignorance.



We'd love to hear from you
[***westhistorical@myfairpoint.net***](mailto:westhistorical@myfairpoint.net)