



Westbrook Historical Society & Museum February 2023 Newsletter

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Dear Members:

We are about to open our museum for 2023. Starting March 1, we will be open every Wednesday morning 9 -12. We will also open the museum for you by appointment.

January and February were spent planning programs for the year, responding to inquiries about our town's history, and keeping our Facebook page and our collections fresh. And we have been listening to ideas for use of the historically significant 121 South Main Street property, one of the oldest homes in Westbrook, which was donated by Leighton Lee III to the town in 2022 with the agreement that it would be used for historic purposes.

We hope to see you at our events and in our museum in 2023, and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Marcy Fuller, President, Westbrook Historical Society

LOOKING BACK, 2022 was one successful year for WESTBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

After a successful year of exhibits that brought new people into our museum, speakers who brought history to life, the launch of the Westbrook Memory Book, more members, more volunteers, and a successful Day on the Green, our final event of the year - the OCTOBER tour of the Old Burying Ground – was a great success.

And we celebrated our success in December at our annual meeting in the Community Room of the library, where we voted in officers for 2023.

WHO'S WHO AT THE WESTBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR 2023

(*officers voted in at the December 2022 meeting):

***President:** Marcy Fuller

***Vice President:** Nile Barrett

***Treasurer:** Darlene Jones

***Recording Secretary:** Gail Colby

Archivist: Sandra Forest

Textile and Clothing Curator: Roberta DeLeo

Membership Chair: Suzanne LePage

Corresponding Secretary: Claire Smith

Publicity: V. J. Peregolise

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MUSEUM IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2023:

- **A PRICELESS DONATION TO OUR MUSEUM:** In January, we received a Historical Society's dream: boxes of well preserved and well organized Westbrook records with dates as early as 1773. The materials were donated by Leighton Lee, III and had been housed at the Museum of Early Engineering Technology on South Main Street, a building he recently donated to the town. Many of the items relate to the history of David Bushnell, the Westbrook resident who famously invented the first submarine, the American Turtle. Other topics are included too. One is titled "The Descendants of Westbrook Settlers," a group founded in the 1919. Archivist Sandra Forest is leading the accessioning and scanning project to record all of these items into our museum's records. Volunteers Suzanne LePage and Karen Conkey have been doing the careful scanning. These records are available for viewing and research at our Historical Society.
- **PHOTOS OF OUR MUSEUM'S OBJECTS:** Our Vice President Nile Barret has been leading the project to photograph objects in our museum for our records, a valuable step in preserving our collections for the future.
- **A NEW SPEAKER SYSTEM:** We have also secured a new portable speaker, with microphone, which can be used outside and in.
- **GRANTS! Connecticut Humanities** has granted us \$5,000 to support our 2023 programs and events. **Essex Savings Bank** has made us an eligible organization in their annual Community Investment Program, which allows their account holders to choose a non-profit for a slice of the bank's annual contributions.

- **And we've been planning interesting events for 2023!** Read on.

JOIN US FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS. All take place in the Westbrook Public Library Community Room. All are free of charge. All are made possible by a grant from CT Humanities.

- **MARCH 30**, Th, 6:30-7:30 p.m. **TORIES, SPIES & TRAITORS: DIVIDED LOYALTY IN REVOLUTIONARY CONNECTICUT** presented by Natalie Belanger of the Connecticut Historical Society.
- **APRIL 13**, Th, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Portrayal of **ATTORNEY MARY HALL, CONNECTICUT'S FIRST LADY LAWYER** performed by Marti Smith.
- **MAY 11**, Th, 6:30-7:30 p.m. **TAPPING INTO THE PAST: TAVERN LIFE IN EARLY CONNECTICUT** presented by Annie O'Brien of the Connecticut Historical Society.
- **JUNE 22**, Th, 6:30-7:30 p.m. **REMEMBERING CONNECTICUT'S DOUGHBOYS: THE WORLD WAR ONE MEMORIALS OF CONNECTICUT** presented by Richard Franklin Donohue.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP US CONTINUE TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

- **REMINDERS:** All members are welcome to attend our monthly business meeting on the third Tuesday of each month at the museum, and to stop in on Wednesday mornings when the museum is open. If you would like to visit at a different time, please contact us and we will make arrangements.
- If you are an **Essex Savings Bank** customer, choose Westbrook Historical Society in the bank's Community Investment Program by June 30.
- Would you like to run an **historical book club**? Could be historical fiction or non-fiction. Several people are interested in this idea and we are looking for a leader.
- Do you know a **Westbrook student** who is looking for volunteer work? We have ideas, and have someone who will guide them.
- Would you like to help us **research one of these topics** - Westbrook Revolutionary Soldiers, Enslaved People of Westbrook, or Salt Island? We have people and resources you can work with.
- If you have an annual membership, remember to **renew**.
- **Attend and bring friends** to our monthly events.
- Check Westbrook Historical Society **Facebook** page. Share some of your old Westbrook photos on the Facebook page. People love them.

The Westbrook Historical Society Museum, located at 1196 Boston Post Road on the Westbrook Town Green, is open to the public Wednesdays 9-12 and by appointment.

Tel: 860-399-7473; Mailing Address: P. O. Box 148, Westbrook, CT 06498;

Email: westbrookhistoricalsocietyct@gmail.com (don't forget the ct!)

FACEBOOK: Westbrook Historical Society