

Attention all gardening enthusiasts! Please join us on Sunday, June 11th when Westport Historical Society presents its 26th Annual Hidden Garden Tour from 11am to 4pm.

Tour-goers will have a very special opportunity to experience six spectacular, not-to-be-missed gardens in Westport, Southport and Easton. "Each garden has been carefully selected," said Event Co-Chair Terri Keppel. One of the gardens was a favorite of a past Tour and is being showcased again by popular demand to see how it has evolved.

Exceptional sights to see include: a property inspired by the gardens of Monet in Giverny, France; a seven-acre estate with a pool and pool house adorned with parterres of pale pink Bonica roses edged in English boxwood; a garden belonging to a Master Gardener which is entered through a honeysuckle-covered arbor; a cottage garden with cast iron ornaments, walls, evergreens and dried grasses; a property set behind the Aspetuck Land Trust with an English Garden with a fountain



and several garden areas; and a property with a pool and new Bluestone patio with tulips, lilacs and climbing roses.

On Tour Day there will also be a Garden Market on the WHS Wheeler House lawn from 9am to 5pm. Admission to the Garden Market is free

and will feature a variety of local artists offering items such as lavender filled silk pillows, meditation pillows, jewelry, necklace charms as well as linen table-top accessories. There will also be vendors selling antique prints and vintage silver, crystal and glass items.

The **Hidden Garden Tour** is **Sunday, June 11, 11am to 4pm**. Tickets are \$50 (members) and \$60 (non-members) in advance, \$75 day of Tour. All proceeds benefit the educational and cultural programs of WHS. For more information and to purchase tickets visit westporthistory.org, call 203-222-1424, or stop in at the Westport Historical Society, 25 Avery Place. Hidden Garden Tour tickets and directions will be available for pick-up at the Westport Historical Society on Tour Day starting at 10am.

This year we are combining the garden tour and house tour soirees into one Gala event called the **Westport Sweet Onion Fest** - Weekend Celebration of Westport's agricultural roots as onion growers. **Fri Oct 13th** - Party under the tent. **Sat Oct 14** - Family Fun under the tent. **Please Save the Dates!**

We thank our Sponsors to date for their generous support of these events:
LEAD: BNY Mellon Wealth Management;
ANNUAL: Adolph and Ruth Schurmacher Foundation, Berchem, Moses & Devlin, P.C., Maplewood Senior Living, Sachs Walsh Insurance, Brown's Monument Works; EVENT: First County Bank, Darton & Company, Darien Rowayton Bank, Oliver Nurseries & Design Associates, Edward F. Gerber, The Dental Center of Westport, The Care of Trees, Arlene and Marty Yolles and Shake Shack.

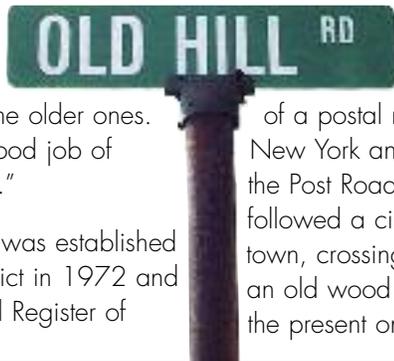


Kings Highway North Historic District Walking Tour

Saturday, May 6th, 2017, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Edward F. Gerber, Past President of the Historical Society, will host a walking tour of the Kings Highway North Historic District. The tour will be an opportunity for history buffs to learn about one of the town's oldest settled areas, some homes of which date to the mid-1700s. "I will talk about the fact that Kings Highway is a historic district and what that means," said Gerber, "we will tour one of the oldest houses in the district which is undergoing major restoration". Gerber said he will talk about the style of the houses and the fact that, although they were built from the early 1700s to the mid-1900s, "you can't tell the later houses from the older ones. The architects did a good job of blending old and new."

Kings Highway North was established as a local historic district in 1972 and named to the National Register of



Historic Places in 1998. It encompasses 106 "contributing buildings" – structures that add to the district's historical qualities – and four historic sites. Most of the contributing buildings are homes in the Colonial Revival style. The historic sites include a small triangular green at the intersection of Old Hill Road and Kings Highway North that was used as a military drill ground, the adjoining Christ and Holy Trinity and Church of the Assumption cemeteries across Kings Highway from Old Hill Road, and an earlier graveyard, laid out in 1740, at the northwest corner of Kings Highway North and Wilton Road. Originally, Kings Highway North was part of a postal road laid out between New York and Boston in 1762. Unlike the Post Road, which was built later, it followed a circuitous route through town, crossing the Saugatuck River over an old wood bridge just upstream from the present one.

Gerber will be accompanied on the tour by Edward Hynes, a specialist on the history of Westport during the American Revolution. Hynes will discuss the planned ambush by Continental troops under Benedict Arnold to fire cannons from the high ground on Old Hill down on British soldiers returning from a raid on Danbury to prevent them from crossing the river on the bridge below. But the British outsmarted the Colonials and crossed upriver near the site of present Ford Road.

Meet across from the cemeteries at the foot of Old Hill Road; park along Kings Highway North. After the tour, join us for a complimentary drink hosted by 323 Restaurant & Bar on Main Street.

\$8 Members, \$10 Non-members, no charge for children 12 and under. Reservations are recommended, please call: (203) 222-1424.

Award of Merit to WHS

Westport Historical Society has been awarded an Award of Merit for the educational program **Exploring Westport History at the Wheeler House** by the Connecticut League of Historical Organizations.

The Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO) is an organization which helps historical organizations in Connecticut develop and network according to national museum standards. The CLHO presents Awards of Merit to institutions and individuals who demonstrate the highest of professional standards, and who enhance and further the understanding of Connecticut history.

The purpose of the Awards of Merit is to recognize the care, thought and effort invested in these contributions and to inspire and encourage others by acknowledging exceptional contributions to state and local history. The mere fulfillment of routine functions does not justify an award. Action over and above



CONNECTICUT LEAGUE OF HISTORY ORGANIZATIONS
Building a strong network for Connecticut's heritage organizations

the ordinary call of duty is prerequisite for an Award of Merit.

Westport Historical Society (WHS) has been taking part in the CLHO coordinated StEPs program to develop a strong professional based museum for local history to be unlocked. Through this program WHS has been standardizing its practices and striving to create

interactive and relevant programs for today's audience.

Exploring Westport History at the Wheeler House is an annual field trip all Westport public school third grade students participate in.

"Winning the merit award was validation for all the hard work and determination everyone at WHS is putting forward," said Education and Programming Director, Nicole Carpenter, "not only for this tour but for all of our programs, events and exhibitions."

The High School That Rocked!

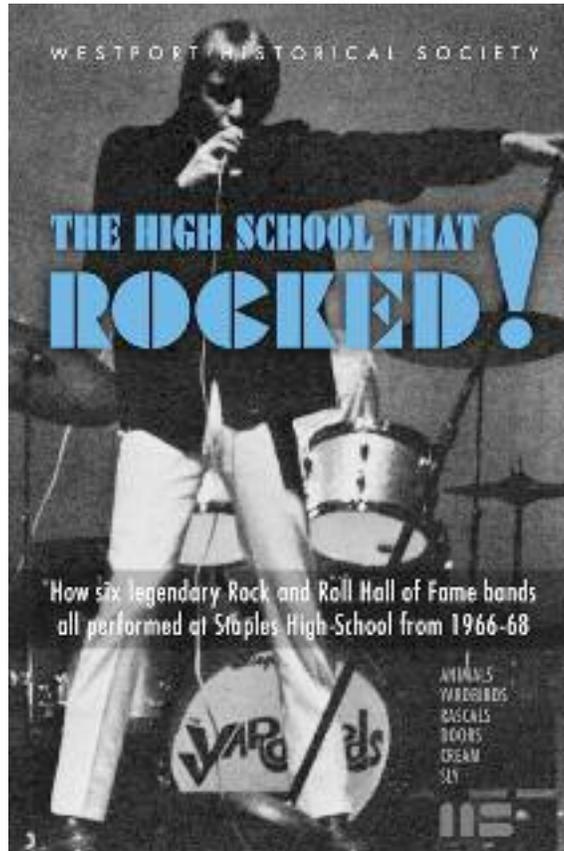
Curators: Fred Cantor & Mary Gai

**Animals, Yardbirds, Rascals, Doors, Cream And Sly All Performed At Staples High School
June 16 – September 2, 2017 • Sheffer Gallery Exhibit**

The focus of the exhibit will be on capturing the story of how six legendary bands (later inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame) all performed at Staples High from 1966-68, creating indelible memories for local students. It is a unique slice of rock history that happened right here in Westport—and a moment in time that will probably never happen again.

The High School That Rocked exhibit at the Westport Historical Society will be built around the subject matter of the new documentary short (with the same title) that has already generated a fair amount of favorable media coverage.

The exhibit will display over 100 vintage visuals including replicas of the original concert posters, blow-ups of ticket stubs, clippings from the Staples student newspaper Inklings and the



local Town Crier, and photos taken at the concerts and behind the scenes by high school and junior high students. It will contain a clip from the documentary short, along with a vintage portable record player, records, and clock radio—so that WHS baby-boom visitors can not only relive but also hear some of those classic music memories or, in the case of younger visitors, discover how kids back then actually listened to new music.

Finally, the exhibit will also contain visuals and information pertaining to Staples alumni from that era that made their mark in the world of music.

The ultimate goal is to create not just an exhibit but an atmosphere that will be both informative and pure fun!



Come Build Westport is the Lego building event held on Sunday, March 12th. This program was enthusiastically enjoyed by 80 people - the Christ Church staff were amazing and the energy was high. All proceeds support our education program. Thank you to Stephen Schwartz, the architect from New Jersey who brought this event to Westport. This event will be held again in March 2018

The deadline to buy your engraved brick is July 4th. Order online now!



Education News

The 1st Annual First Grade field-trip "History at the Wheeler House and Adams Academy" will take place from May 18th to June 2nd. Every year WHS runs a third grade tour and we are now adding a tour for first graders.

The field trip is based at WHS' Wheeler House and Adams Academy on Morningside Drive. The Wheeler Houses' original saltbox construction was built by Ebenezer Coley in 1795, and in approximately 1865 Morris Bradley "modernized" it to the Italianate style. The Adams Academy was built in 1835 and bought by Ebenezer Adams in 1837 to be used as a school.

At the two locations students will have the opportunity to



explore questions, using costumes, objects and activities, on "How has Westport evolved over time?" at three thematic learning centers based on curriculum tie-ins. The first graders will participate in activities such as colonial dancing, carding and creative 19th century spelling.

High school interns from Staples, Fairfield Ludlow and Weston will be docents.

They will be trained on the local history and curriculum links of each center and in inquiry-based learning and use of prompts to facilitate discussion within the student groups about what they observe. Guides will follow the model of Westport Public Schools "Centers", with focused activity and prompts/questions to consider on each topic.



Colonial Family Fun Day, May 21st • 1-5 pm

Visitors are invited to join WHS for a fun filled afternoon of activities relating to life in the 18th century.

Collaborating with two local chefs and several Westport organizations, WHS hosts activities such as; cooking marzipan hedgehogs, crafting silhouettes, planting seeds and much more!

A donation of \$20 per family is suggested.

Join WHS for one of the Time Travelers summer camp sessions. Each week-long session is open for children ages 7-12 and will take place from 9am-1pm. Additionally each session will include a special end of camp celebration on Friday.



Session One: New World Explorers -- June 26-30

Colonial life in Connecticut was about

more than growing onions. Explore how colonial Westporters and Native peoples of the area traveled, cooked, played and lived during the colonists first days in the New World.

Session Two: History Detectives -- August 14-18

Discover some of the mysterious Westport residents such as the

Sherwood triplets and Mary Bradley. Investigate and solve a different crime, event, or location each day.

Session Three: Global Archaeologists -- August 21-25

Step back in time but also travel around the globe to discover artwork, events and traditions from different countries and cultures. Each day archaeologists will focus on a different continent and will uncover different treasures from that region



We welcome spring and rejoice in the longer days and beautiful environment that begins to flourish

around us bringing inspiration, new beginnings and a fresh start. The path of the Westport Historical Society is definitely taking off in new directions and is filled with hope and promise. First, the brick walk project that will be completed in July will be a very inviting patio and walkway to bring visitors to WHS. It will be engraved with family names, salutations and local businesses who want to leave a legacy in Westport. We are proud that the names of our residents and their special words to recognize or commemorate an event or person will be forever on our front lawn. A reason to bring friends and family to see their names engraved and to wander inside our facility to see what we have in store for them.

We are always coming up with new and marvelous exhibits to view; a gift shop that is always bringing in new

Message from the Executive Director

merchandise with Westport logos or a new framed picture of a special destination in Westport for you to enjoy at home. Whatever it is you are looking for, we can find the gift that will express the kindness behind the giving.

We have many people giving a lot of time, not to mention their talents to make our programs, exhibitions and research projects memorable and worthwhile experiences. We pride ourselves on being a "hub of Westport" – a portal if you will of everything Westport but also a place to gather and make new friends. Most importantly, we receive your interest in volunteering with open arms as your contribution of time is essential for us to provide the high quality activities we do. Nicole Carpenter, our Director of Education/Programs and I are gearing up for a training program in July and August for our interested volunteers to get a great insight into the

history of the Wheeler House, Westport's unique history and to feel connected to their volunteer position at WHS. We hope you will let us know if you would like to be part of this training program for volunteers.

Whether you like to learn more about our local history on foot in one of our upcoming walking tours, spend the morning on a ferry boat around Historic Black Rock Harbor or take a ride on an oyster boat from Norm Bloom's oyster plant in Norwalk, we are happy to organize these adventures that explore our neighboring communities. We invite you to come to concerts, speakers and art sales at WHS because we feel our destination is worth a trip from anywhere.

As one of our esteemed continuing sponsors wrote us recently, "We are fortunate to be able to support WHS; one of Westport's gems." We hope you feel the same way and will take part in our organization in ways that make you feel good and know that your financial contributions are filling us up with optimism and hope for a prosperous and flourishing future.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Barbara Van Orden left the board of directors this year after 30 years as head of volunteers and collections. She saw many changes at WHS. After retiring from working at the Yale Art Gallery for 20 years, she joined WHS right after they bought the house in 1981.

"The house was in terrible shape," she said. And it was empty. She started by decorating the period rooms, as authentically as possible. She joined the committee doing the restoration. She joined Fran Thomas to furnish the kitchen. "It wasn't just a willy nilly selection — I looked at the inventory and tried very hard to follow it as accurately as possible." She described travelling far and wide to pick up pieces at estate sales and auction houses. It wasn't easy finding wallpaper with gold in it. At the time there was a separate committee to work on the barn.

Thank you Barbara for your many years of service to WHS

People used to donate a lot to WHS. One donation she remembers was the 19th century quilt on the bed upstairs from the Scribner family. A dealer in Chicago had it and someone saw it and recognized that it was from Westport (there were Westport family signatures on it). Barbara worked hard to get the price down so that WHS could have it.

She recalls fondly the galas that were held on the lawn, with Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward helping out and attracting guests with Paul tending the bar. The ladies would dress up in Victorian gowns.

Thank you Barbara for your many years of service to WHS. You helped make WHS the wonderful place it is.



Upcoming Events

Go to westporthistory.org for updates and more information on all events.
For reservations, call: 222-1424 • M-F, 10 am – 4:30 pm, Saturday, Noon – 4 pm

Events:

Kings Highway North Historic District Walking Tour

Saturday, May 6 – 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Danbury Raid Bus Tour with Ed Hynes

Sunday, May 7 – 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Saugatuck History Walking Tour

Sat. May 13- 3-4pm

Tax Credit for Historic Preservation

Saturday, May 20 – 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Adams Academy Open House

Saturday, May 20 – 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

- **Colonial Family Fun Day**
Sunday, May 21 – 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
- **26th Annual Hidden Garden Tour**
Sunday, June 11 – 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
- **Historic Business District Walking Tour:
National Hall & Post Rd East**
Saturday, June 17 – 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm
- **Current Exhibit: The Danbury Raid**
Through May 29, 2017, in the Mollie Donovan Gallery,
Katherine Ross Artist/Educator
- **Upcoming Exhibit: The School That Rocked**
Opening Reception June 16



If you would like to
become a member
visit our website,
westporthistory.org
or call 203-222-1424.

