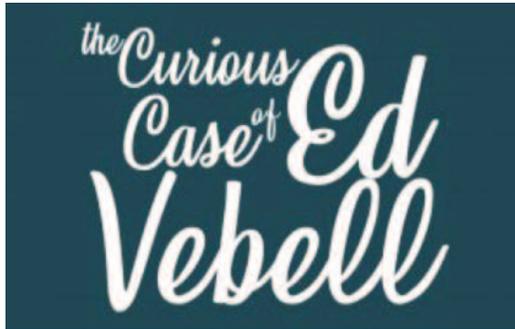


**M**eet Ed Vebell. He is 96, and he's probably lived a more interesting life than many of you. Like most of your older relatives Ed has stories to tell, but his span the globe, time, and famous events.

It all started when Ed was shipped off to war. Ed nearly became an aircraft gunner, an occupation with a notoriously short lifespan, but when his superiors were alerted to his artistic ability he was quickly transferred to the US Army's military newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*, as a field illustrator. As it turns out, illus-



**EXHIBIT OPENING JAN 28**

trating battles was only the beginning of a decades-long journey through odd, extraordinary and potentially lethal experiences.

Mr. Vebell spent years in exotic places like Morocco and the cabarets of Paris. His years as an illustrator, for publications like Sports Illustrated and Reader's Digest, connected him with a cavalcade of characters including Grace Kelly and Matisse. Oh, and did we mention he also competed at the 1952 Olympics in fencing?

A century gives you opportunities to

acquire interesting life experiences and trinkets; like any traveler he collected some souvenirs along the way in treasures from Buffalo Bill's hat to a spear from the Maasai, an African lion hunter tribe.

Join us and become immersed in the life of arguably Westport's most interesting man, and be sure to look for Ed's recently published book "An Artist at War". Signed copies will be available for sale at the exhibit opening and in our gift shop.

The opening reception for the Curious Case of Ed Vebell is January 28th from 2 to 4 pm.

Thank you to our exhibit sponsors,  
 Laurence S. Untermeyer,  
 Arlene and Marty Yolles

## A Q & A with Ed Vebell



*Lincoln and Booth by Ed Vebell*

**E**d Vebell is the headliner at Westport History Society's new exhibition "The Curious Case of Ed Vebell" and for good reason. Ed has traveled the world covering war, sports and

adventure as an illustrator, Olympian and reporter.

### **Where did you grow up and what was it like?**

I grew up in Chicago during the Depression, we had no money, everyone was broke. My father owned two grocery stores, but he lost them both because he would extend credit to everybody and nobody paid him. It was tough but when you're a kid you accept it all. My parents were Eastern European and they gave you a bed and they gave you food and then you were on your own. It was

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up to you to get an education and do something with yourself. When I was about fourteen years old, my mother said "What are you doing with yourself?" and I said "Going to art school" and she goes "Oh you are?!"

**How did you get involved with illustration during WWII?**

I was a professional artist for one year before I got into the army and had a big studio in Chicago. One of the salesman we had there disappeared and he came back with a military uniform on; he was a second lieutenant in the American army. He stuck his head in where we were all working, the five of us in the bullpen, and he said "Anyone want to be an artist in the army?" I remember working away and I said "SURE," I never even looked up from my work.

**How did you get involved with Stars and Stripes**

I went to the Omaha beach. I came in right after the North African invasion. When I got to *Stars and Stripes* office or rather their building they were looking for an artist and I just happened to be there at the right time. They said "Do you want a job?" And I said "Sure do" and it took me away from the air force camouflage unit I was in and started my whole life all over again – it saved my life as a matter of fact.

**What was life like in Stars and Stripes during WWII?**

My life on *Stars and Stripes* was interesting, they send you to the front, drop you off and say "Pick you up in three or four

days" and you're on your own. In other words you're an artist reporter and you find your own stories. You just keep roaming and hope you don't get shot. That was the one thing I worried about, an artist has to stay there and draw, while a photographer can take a picture and get his head down, but an artist can't do that. He has to stay there and he's a little exposed.

**What brought you to Westport?**

I was looking for a studio with light like in Paris. I looked all over Jersey, I looked all over New York, finally I came to Westport and bought this.

**Did you come because you knew other artists were here?**

No, just because of this window in my studio!

**So you were surprised it was an artists colony?**

Well I knew it was an artist colony, I'd heard about it, but I'd never been there. 200 of us here when I came here in 1953, I'm the last one. I'm the last artist - illustrator. They're all gone except for me. I was in charge of the exhibitions committee so I had to gather all the artists work here. It was inspirational – the best artists in the country so I had a private exhibit room here.

Join WHS January 28th - April 16th for "The Curious Case of Ed Vebell."

## COLLECTIONS SPOTLIGHT

In March of 2017, we got a call from Mrs. Barbara Haughwout of Virginia Beach to tell us she had a portrait of a prominent Westport resident, Richard Henry Winslow. He was the owner of Compo House, also known as the Winslow Mansion that formerly occupied what is now Winslow Park.

This painting is a family heirloom as she is a direct descendant of Mr. Winslow's sister, Mary Jane Winslow Dwight. The portrait was passed to Mrs. Haughwout from her mother; when she and her husband were preparing to move to a new home, she inquired if this might be something of interest.

At a Collections Committee meeting, photos of the portrait were reviewed and a decision was made to accept this special painting. Mr. Winslow's portrait was delivered last September and we are in the process of talking to conservators for some areas that need restoration.



While Mr. Winslow and his wife, Mary Fitch Winslow, lived at Compo House from 1853 – 1861, they maintained a Register of Visitors which is in our Archive Collection. Mary stayed at the house until 1866 but doesn't seem to have kept up with the daily log except to paste in her husband's obituary from the newspapers and a few other articles. Interesting signers of the register include the former President of the United States, Millard Fillmore and his wife Caroline, as well as the French jeweler, Louis-Francois Cartier.

There are also some interesting remarks written by visitors. One notes the beautiful fireworks display Mr. Winslow put on for the Fourth of July in 1858. Another is a very moving passage written by one of

his brothers upon Mr. Winslow's untimely death, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1861. Sincere thanks to Mrs. Haughwout for this important donation.

# C A L E N D A R

For reservations and pricing call (203) 222-1424 or visit westporthistory.org

All programs are held at Westport Historical Society unless otherwise noted.

## Annual Meeting [Members Only]

Sunday, January 28 - 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Members are invited to vote in the new officers and discuss 2018 for WHS.

## The Curious Case of Ed Vebell: Exhibition Opening

Sunday, January 28 - 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Join us and become immersed in the life of arguably Westport's most interesting man

## Volunteer Open House

Thursday, February 8 - 10:00 am - 1:00 pm & 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Hear about the opportunities available for volunteers of all ages! From writing, design, event planning, research, installation and more.

## On the Front: Veterans Reflections on WWI and WWII

Sunday, February 4 - 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Veterans from various conflicts give their take on the impacts of war on society and individuals.

## Sunday with the Society: Secrets and Codes

Sunday, February 10 - 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Families are invited to solve codes to unlock a secret, and learn about code breakers in WWI & WWII.

## On the Menu: Exhibit Curators Discussion

Wednesday, February 14 - 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Co-curators Nicole Carpenter and Nick Foster discuss "The Curious Case of Ed Vebell" and the importance it holds for Westport and the world.

## February Break Program: Awareness and Social Activism

February 20-22 - 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Children, age 7-11, take part in a three day program centered on social engagement.

## "Code Girls": Author Talk with Liza Mundy

Tuesday, February 27 - 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm, *Located at the Westport Library, Large Reading Room*

Author Liz Mundy discusses her book about female code breakers in WWII.

## Theater Workshop

Wednesdays March 7-May 9 - 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

An eight week workshop for teens and adults to learn the basics of acting and historical reenactment.

## "Community and Country": Film Showing

Thursday, March 8 - 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Watch the local veterans film created by Jarret Liotta. Featuring Ed Vebell, Leonard Everett Fisher, Ted Diamond and Bob Satter.

## Swing Dance with Erik Novoa

TBA - 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm, *Located at Saugatuck Congregational Church, Hoskins Hall*

Learn East Coast swing with your family and friends!

## On the Menu: Collection Highlight

Wednesday, March 14 - 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Journey through some of the highlights of the museums costume collection.

## Trial of the Century: Nuremberg Trials Lecture

Thursday, March 15 - 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Mark Albertson speaks about the impact of the trials of Nazi leaders following WWII.

## Sunday with the Society: Come Build Westport LEGO Program

Sunday, March 18 - 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm, *Located at Christ and Holy Trinity Church, Seabury Center*

Families build downtown Westport out of legos!

## Fencing Demonstration with Fairfield Fencing Academy

TBA

Watch a fencing demonstration before trying

a technique or two for yourself.

## History Book Discussion Group

Sunday, April 8 - 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm, *Westport Library Program relocated to WHS*

A monthly history book discussion group. April's book is *All the Truth Is Out: The Week Politics Went Tabloid*.

## April Break Program: Inventions

April 10-12 - 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Children, age 7-11, take part in a three day program centered on inventors and their creations.

## On the Menu: TBD

Wednesday, April 11 - 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

## "Connecticut Icons": Author Talk with Charles Monagan

Thursday, April 12 - 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm, *Westport Library Program relocated to WHS*

Author Charles Monagan discusses his book about 58 icons of Connecticut, such as the Merritt Parkway and hot lobster rolls.

## Westport Makers Faire

Saturday, April 21 - 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, *Located at the Westport Library*

Local inventors and makers, including WHS, exhibit their creations.

## Sunday with the Society: Gingerbread and Raids

Sunday, April 22 - 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Learn about the raid on Danbury and make gingerbread much like the recipe served by Martha Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette.

## Danbury Raid Lecture with Ed Hynes

Wednesday, April 25 - 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Ed Hynes, Curator of the 2107 exhibition on the Danbury Raid, will speak about the only inland raid in Connecticut during the Revolution during the 241st anniversary month.

## Tea with the Directors: Education and Programs Director

Friday, April 27 - 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Tea, quick bites, and a collection highlight with the Director of Education and Programs at WHS.

## Meet WHS Volunteer Bill Chase



It's no surprise that Bill Chase feels like a natural in the WHS archives. His grandfather educated himself through an impressive collection of books, mostly on the Civil War and on exploration, including first-edition volumes by Mark Twain. As a kid growing up in Indiana, Bill remembers combing through that huge library at his grandparents' house. Later, he would inherit not only his grandfather's books by early explorers, but also a love of reading, nurturing an interest in biographies, major wars, and exploration.

Bill's wife, Katie Chase, worked in the WHS archives from 2000 until her death in August, 2015. When Bill retired from American Roland Foods Corporation the following April, he virtually ran to the archives to sign up as a volunteer. "I thought, 'I like history and I have time,'" he explains simply.

Since then, Bill can be found in the archives three days a week, mostly organizing materials donated by community

members and loaned by The Westport Library — and doing anything else archivists Sven Selander and Sara Krasne need help with. "There's always interesting stuff to do," he says, and it's a nice change from corporate life. "I'm really very happy being there as a volunteer, not having to be in charge of anybody, not having to go to meetings and listen and talk, but just doing whatever Sara and Sven would like me to do."

Bill also helped organize the archives at the Green's Farms Church, where he is a member, a project that culminated in an exhibition on the church's early 18th-century origins.

For a history buff, perusing old files can make him feel "like a kid in a candy store." A photo of world-renowned sculptor James Earle Fraser or the title of one of Robert Lawson's celebrated children's books could send Bill off on a research project to learn more about the famous Westporters whose colorful lives are preserved in the WHS basement.

"The most fascinating stuff is the biographical material," he says. "I've always known that Westport was known for its artists, until I started going through these files and reading about others, like writers and politicians. I feel like I've really learned a lot about Westport history over the last two years."

— by *Cindy Mindell*

## Education Initiatives at WHS

With the New Year, Westport History Society is ramping up the opportunities to connect with our local community. Families, students, seniors, retirees and children of all ages are invited and needed at the society to help our town thrive. To get audiences of all shapes and sizes the Education and Programming Department here at WHS is excited to showcase some of the new offerings ahead.

Each year WHS puts on exhibitions showcasing a unique part of Westport's



history; starting this year programs will be based increasingly on these exhibit themes. To start the year off "The Curious Case of Ed Vebell" will feature programming related to his

sport and illustration careers.

One Wednesday a month we will feature a speaker during the lunch hour for our "On the Menu" lecture series. These lunch lectures will focus on exhibit curator talks, highlights from our collection and interesting characters from Westport. Children and families

will also enjoy a monthly offering "Sunday with the Society" where history is learned through a quick hour-and-a-half morning program and snack.

Those looking to connect directly are invited to come to the museum once a month, starting in April, to have "Tea with the Directors". Either the Executive Director or Education and Programs Director will serve tea and discuss exciting new initiatives, as well as one of their favorite collection objects. Discussion, suggestions and questions are welcome!

All these and more at the Westport History Society but these great programs need your support! Volunteer, donate and advocate for WHS to get involved with your community and learn a little bit about local heritage.

# From our new Executive Director



## What is History Really?

When I was eight years old,

in the summer of 1976, my family traveled to Philadelphia and then Washington DC for the nation's bicentennial celebrations. My parents, each an immigrant from opposite sides of the globe, were serious people, acutely sensible of the responsibility to assimilate and excel in order to raise their American-born children. Understanding our history, they believed, was part of their charge.

In a way I rarely saw, my father, was extremely excited about the experience. He listed, rapt, to the National Park Service rangers at Independence Hall, visibly moved by their vibrant descriptions of all that happened there. In the capital city he proudly toured the Congress and White House, telling my brother and I that we, too, could aspire to those hallowed halls. At Mount Vernon, he eagerly toured the house and grounds, turning deeply sober in the quarters of the enslaved people. He had been born and raised in the Caribbean where, as in America, the aftermath of slavery and indenture was a wound deeply felt.

My father was fascinated by the idea of history; my mother, coming from a culture with a long association to antiq-

uity, was less so. She was assured of the past—and therefore the future—in a way that he was not. And although we travelled often, giving particular attention to heritage sites—I don't ever recall seeing him as eager as during that trip.

Energized by his excitement, I saw the world with new eyes. I felt a frisson of excitement at the Liberty Bell, a sense of awe in the halls of Congress. My lifelong love of history began in the summer of 1976.

Like all love affairs it's had its ups and downs, moments of pride and of disappointment, shock and happy surprise. But as with all solid long relationships it has survived because of a strong foundation based in an evolving understanding of what it truly is.

Today as I assume my position as Executive Director, I ask you to consider this question. What is history to you really?

For me it's a living and breathing thing, one that ebbs and flows through every moment of our lives informing who we are and who we could be—whether we know it or not. As every day closes, it becomes a palimpsest upon which the story of the future is written and rewritten.

History, my friends, is alive.

As I accept the reins from the capable and loving hands of Sue Gold, among my many goals for our beloved Historical Society is to offer you the vision of a vibrant and engaged future,

born of honoring our past.

Can you imagine a tomorrow where WHS is at the forefront of town life? A place where folks are eager to arrive and reluctant to leave? A place with something for everyone?

I can. But I need your help to get us there.

Have thoughts on adult programming? Fundraising? Exhibits? Ideas about re-imagining our spaces? Education for K-12? Anything at all?

I want to hear them.

We live in a special town, rich with history, public engagement, arts and culture and, most of all, history-makers—chief among them is *you* and I want to hear your voice.

Drop a note in the mail, email me at, [suggestions@westporthistory.org](mailto:suggestions@westporthistory.org), or stop by and add to our new Suggestions Box. While you're here, check out our new look, and our exciting new exhibit: *The Curious Case of Ed Vebell*, as well as, in February, the launch of our year long interactive installation: *The History of Westport in 100 Objects*. Plus, don't forget to check out our jam-packed events calendar!

Thanks for listening—and I hope you'll give me a chance to do the same.

Warmly,

## New Mini Exhibit on the History of Westport in 100 Objects



### WHAT THE...?

Cannonball on a stick? Bizarre hammer? Ancient lint roller? What could this object from our collections be? The answer is

part of our new year-long exhibit—**The History of Westport in 100 Objects**.

Over the next year, we'll be telling the story of Westport through the many amazing and historically significant objects

in our archives, art, objects, and costume collections.

Stop in at WHS beginning **February 12<sup>th</sup>** to check out this mini-exhibit rotating through the Wheeler House and guess the latest mystery object for a chance to win an item from our Shop!

Drop your answer in the box rotating through Wheeler House or email it to [100objects@westporthistory.org](mailto:100objects@westporthistory.org). Guess correctly and we'll enter your name in a drawing to win a popular Westport mug from our gift shop!

## Keep in Mind

Go to [westporthistory.org](http://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



### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT :

WHS has volunteer opportunities for folks as young as 12, like Sophia Vellotti, who helped as a teacher's assistant at the Society's Martin Luther King Day program. Sophia is the daughter of WHS Executive Director, Ramin Ganeshram, and a

passionate history buff in her own right. Learn more about our extensive volunteer opportunities at our Volunteer Open House on Feb. 8.

**VOLUNTEER OPEN HOUSE!** Join us at the Society from 10 am- 1pm and 4pm - 7pm on February 8<sup>th</sup> to learn about our many volunteer opportunities from archives and research to tours and special events, marketing, branding and much more. All are welcome. Light refreshments will be served.

### SUMMER CAMP



Join the WHS award winning education team for one of three of the Time Travelers Summer Camp

sessions. Each week-long session is open for children ages 7-12 and will take place from 9 am – 1 pm. Each session will also include a one day field trip to a local site during the week and a special end of camp celebration on Friday. Visit [westporthistory.org](http://westporthistory.org) for more details.