

Guide to the Westport Business and Commerce Collection

Collection Overview:

REPOSITORY: Westport Historical Society, 25 Avery Place, Westport, CT

CALL NUMBER: RG 5

TITLE: Westport Business and Commerce Collection

DATES: 1813-2014, n.d.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 10.5 linear feet (21 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Westport Business and Commerce Collection contains articles, brochures, invoices, correspondence, advertisements, deeds, and other documentation relating to Westport companies and commerce activities, including manufacturing, agriculture, shell fishing, mills, shipping, and the Westport Bar Association.

HISTORICAL NOTE:

Westport had a navigable river and several streams that could be dammed to produce waterpower in the early days of its history. Grist and saw mills dotted the banks. Ocean-going ships could sail up to warehouses and docks to transport farmers' products to other coastal communities as well as to the West Indies. When farming became specialized, Westport onions were shipped to New York City, to the benefit of several local families as well as the middlemen – the captains of the packet boats. Detailed ships' logs in this collection document the cargos and financial transactions of various types of boats sailing out of Westport.

The railroad, completed through town in 1848, gradually replaced the market boats. Saugatuck became a favored area for factories and manufacturing concerns extended as far northward as the Richmondville area of the town. The riverbanks continued to be attractive to small industries for their access to shipping and old-fashioned, but still useful, waterpower. The introduction of steam power brought about the almost complete transfer of manufacturing from rural areas to the southwestern coastal area by the end of the 19th century. Except for the fuel industry and small-scale lumber companies, few of Westport's early enterprises still exist.

Among the notable individuals and families involved in business and commerce in Westport are the following:

John S. Jones was editor and publisher of the *Westporter-Herald* and author of the manuscript "Reminiscent Westport." In 1860 he was the Chief Officer of the all-volunteer Compo Engine Company #2.

Charles H. Kemper came from Hudson, NY to manage a tannery that he bought in 1866. At one time he employed 100 men, conducting his business in the brick building on Riverside that became headquarters for the MCA Company in the 1980s. He was a selectman in 1882.

B. H. Toquet was a prolific inventor of mechanical devices. He produced carburetors for Ford motor cars. The business was continued by his son, B. Louis Toquet, who married Nellie Bradley, granddaughter of Morris Bradley, purchaser in 1865 of Wheeler House.

The Nash family bought their mill after the Revolutionary War when they returned from Long Island where they had fled as Tories. The family proved to be resourceful proprietors, turning to ice harvesting when the grist mill business declined.

The Dorr Mill, which was originally a grist mill, was converted to a textile mill and reconverted to grinding grains when the textile industry failed locally. Dorr operated a chemical laboratory at this location and the Embalmers' Supply Company and Glendinning Corporation were subsequent owners.

Other important manufacturing businesses in town included the Baynham Coffin Tack factory and the Saugatuck Manufacturing Co., which was established in 1837 by E. S. Wheeler for the manufacture of cloth-covered buttons and lining tacks for the casket trade.

Agriculture played a significant role in the life of Westport from the time of the first settlers until the 20th century. The first white settlers farmed to feed their own families and livestock, but by the end of the 18th century, residents on the east side of the Saugatuck River were growing onions for market. By the middle of the 19th century onion production was flourishing and the "Southport Globe Onion" was grown and widely sold. Wharves, warehouses, and a tavern were established on the west side of the Saugatuck River to serve the ships that were traveling down river to carry onions to market. After the Civil War, onion production began to decline. Labor shortages, disease and the rise of real estate values all contributed to this decline. By the end of the 19th century, onion farming had virtually disappeared as farmers to the production of other crops for local markets. With the post-World War II housing boom, land became too valuable to be set aside for farming and the last of the big working farms shut down.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection is divided into five series. Photographs have been separated from the collection and are stored in Record Group 13. See also Record Group 8 for additional personal papers of some of the individuals and family represented in this collection.

Series 1 contains general historical background and a set of vintage advertisements for Westport businesses. An essay by Barbara Raymond, "Westport Business & Industry" provides an overview for the collection.

Series 2 provides documentation of specific companies, alphabetically listed. Documentation for the John S. Jones Company includes advertisements, letterheads, invoices, programs, etc. that were printed by the company. Documentation of the Charles H. Kemper Company includes letters, advertisements, and a ledger of the "Charles H. Kemper Hot Leather Works." Documentation for the Lees Manufacturing Company includes land deeds as well as minutes of a meeting of the Saugatuck Manufacturing Company (its original name.) Documentation of the Toquet Company includes business letters, invoices, and patent information. The company made marine motors at Saugatuck near the railroad station and had an office at Metropolitan Building in New York City. A number of blueprints are stored with Oversize material. Documentation of Westport Bank & Trust dates from 1860 to 1984. The bank was formed from 1st National Bank of Westport and Westport Savings Bank in 1913 and acquired by Lafayette American Bank in 1996.

Series 3 contains topically arranged documentation on Agriculture, Fishing/Shellfishing, and Mills/Manufacturing.

Series 4, Shipping Records, contains detailed shipping logs for various boats, including the “James K. Polk” (1853-1880s), the “None Such” (1850-1852), the Lyman Jenison (1852), the “Sarah B. Bulkley” (1875), “Middletown” (1845-1846), and “Intrepid.”

Records of the Westport Bar Association in Series 5 provide a snapshot of the activities of this organization in Westport during the 1970s and 1980s.

ARRANGEMENT

Series 1: Historical Background and Advertisements

Series 2: Documentation of Specific Businesses

Series 3: Topical Documentation: Agriculture, Fishing/Shellfishing, Mills/Manufacturing

Series 4: Shipping Records

Series 5: Westport Bar Association Records

Series 1: Historical Background and Advertisements

Box	Folder	.	Date
1		Essay by Barbara Raymond – “Westport Business & Industry”	
1		Advertisements, business cards, flyers and handbills	
1		Vintage advertisements collected by Dorothea Malm, including for the following companies: Atlantic Starch Works Banks – Citytrust – Bank of Darien Baynham – Casket Tack Tufting Colgan Drug Store and Cannon Drug Store Consolidated Hospital Supply & Laundry Machinery Co. (Raymond Aero Dryer) Cotswold Inn Daybreak Nurseries Dorr Research Laboratories Embalmers’ Supply Co. / C B. Dolge Co. Fallow Flower Company L. H. Gault & Son, Inc. The Georgian Press Gilbertie’s Herb and Garden Center Gristedes Brothers, Inc. Hubbell & Wakeman / Hubbell & Bradley Lindblad Travel, Inc. Paint Bucket Porky Manero’s Steak House Radio Products Company Rippe Farms Sametz, Louis, Inc. Saugatuck Manufacturing Company (button factory)	

		Sherwood, Garlic, Cowell, Diviney & Atwood (law firm) Shilepsky's Apparel Store Stew Leonard's Swezey's of Westport, Inc. Tauck Tours Tennex Corporation of America Videler Photography Wassell Organization, Inc. Welch's Hardware Westport Advertiser Westport Paper Company	
1		Westport war products (article)	1943
1		"Industries of the Past" – paper read by Miss M. Louise Hyde of Greens Farms before the Farmers' Club	
1		Miscellaneous notes and documentation related to business and commerce in Westport	
1		CT Trust for Historic Preservation Statewide Factory and Mill Survey	2014

Series 2: Documentation of Specific Businesses

Box	Folder	.	Date
12	1	Dorr Company	
		John S. Jones Company	
2		A-L: Materials printed: advertisements, broadsides, letterheads, billheads, programs, tickets, cards, brochures	1931-1933
3		P-Y: Materials printed: invoices, letterheads, billheads, programs tickets cards, brochures	1931-1933
		Charles H. Kemper Company – Leather Works	
4		Leather samples	
4		Sample catalogs	
4		Business letters, statements, advertisements	1914-1915
OV1		Payroll books (2)	1914-1915, 1919-1925
OV1		Ledgers: Charles H. Kemper Hot Leather Works	1907-1910, 1908-1909, 1914, 1925
4		Material related to Kemper family, including article "Charles H. Kemper, Prominent Manufacturer," program from Westport Dramatic Club listing Frederick Kemper, actor	

4		Newspaper articles regarding crime in Westport	1923-1924
		Lees Manufacturing Company	
5	1	Land Deeds: Saugatuck & Richmondville Mfg. Co	1813-1820
5	2	Richmondville Mfg. Co. dispute over Keeler Dam	1832-1844
5	2	Richmondville Mfg. Co. deed to Robert Lees	1858
5	2	Lees Mfg. Co. Articles of Association	1880
		Ledgers: Saugatuck Mfg. Co. – Minutes of meetings	1814-1818, 1819-1858
		B. Louis Toquet Company	
6	1	Receipt: New Canaan town tax	1858
6	1	Receipt: A. F. Downes Livery Stables	1894
6	1	Letter: Howson & Howson to B. Louis Toquet re. chain cover case	1898
6	1	U. S. Patent: for nippers improvement	1899
6	1	Letter: re. stove	1899
6	1	Bill: Vulcanized Fibre Co.	1900
6	1	Bill: SNET	1903
6	1	Agreement: assigning a gasoline engine patent held by B. Louis Toquet to the Toquet Motor-Car and Construction Co. of NYC	1904
6	1	Bill: Westport Fire District, and related correspondence	1906-1907
6	1	Bill: Lloyd Nash	1907
6	1	Attachment on Property: Beers Bros.	1912
6	1	City of N.Y. Civil Service (re. surveying?)	n.d.
6	1	Note re. trustee for Mrs. Phelps 1856-1876	
6	1	Note listing stocks, bonds, values	n.d.
6	2	Patent assignment 404.664 to John G. Elliott	1889
6	2	Patent Assignment 404.664 by B. H. Toquet to son B. Louis Toquet for a curling iron	1894
6	2	Letter: correspondence re. above patent	1894-1895
6	3	Certificate from Parisian Inventor's Academy	1889
6	3	Inventions	1890-1900
6	3	Receipts	1898
6	3	Letters	1900-1902
6	4	Letters and orders re. Toquet Launch Co.	1901
6	5	Letters	1901-1902
6	6	Patents: gas engines, G. B. Selden Road Engine(liquid hydro-carbon engine),	

		driving chains, gas generator wheels, tire construction	
6	7	Toquet Motor Co. auto spring damper drawings	1902
6	7	Stanley Co. correspondence	1905
6	7	Contract to build auto (Corbin Motor Vehicle)	1906
7	1	Advertisements of Toquet Carburetors used in Ford cars	
7	2	Various patents, letter	
7	3-5	Correspondence	1905-1907
8	1	Business correspondence	
8	2	Personal correspondence	
8	3	Bridgeport Yacht Club correspondence	
8	4	Patents: ruler and compass	
8	5	Drawing teacher	
Oversize		Day book: Toquet Mfg. Co.	1918-1925
		Water meter readings	1920-1925
		Receiving sales book, household accounts	
		Scrapbook: The Datalog of the Automobile Industry	1918
9	1	Toquet Launch and Motor Co. brochure	1903-1907?
9	2	Shock absorber sketch; specifications for improvements of gas engines; letters	
9	3	Correspondence and invoices	
9	4	Handwritten perspective drawing	
10		Photo album: 1,000 Mile Fuel Economy Test under the auspices of the <i>New York Herald</i> testing the Toquet Carburetor Canceled checks	
12	2	Red Coat Press	
12	3	Regency Retirement Home	
12	4-5	Restaurants – Misc. : menus, incl. Red Barn, Black Duck Café, Chez Pierre, Massiello's , etc.	
12	6	Saugatuck Box Company: Payroll	1905-1906
11		Westport Bank & Trust (First National Bank of Westport): clippings, annual reports, ledgers	
12	7	Westport Bowling Lanes	
12	8	Westport Lumber Co.: booklet of designs for "Select Homes"	Ca. 1950?

Series 3: Topical Documentation: Agriculture, Fishing/Shellfishing, Mills/Manufacturing

Box	Folder	.	Date
		Agriculture	

		(see also Herbert Baldwin papers in RG 8, and files in RG 1 for WHS exhibits on poultry, Wakeman Town Farm)	
13	1	Farms and farming, including re. Greens Farms Farmers Club, Wakeman Farm, Rippe Farm	
13	2	Onion farming and shipping	
13	3	Poultry: "How to Make More Money with Poultry"	1937
		Fishing / Shellfishing	
14	1	General: articles on fishing and oystering, including set of articles by Rindy Higgins re. local shellfishing published in <i>Norwalk Hour</i>	2011, n.d.
14	2	Report of Westport Oyster Committee filed in Fairfield Superior Court to determine boundaries of oyster bed claim	1883
14	3	Oyster bed deeds	1872-1899
14	4	Reports of State of CT Shell-Fish Commissioners	1945-1946, 1950-1953
		See also notes re. cod fisheries in Shipping Records: Miscellaneous	
		Mills/Manufacturing	
15	1	Article: "Saugatuck Manufacturing Company" from D. Hamilton Hurd, <i>The History of Fairfield County</i>	1888
15	1	Sanborn Maps: Flour Mill, Weaver Terry Fabric Co., J. D. Wood Valish Mfg, Lees Mfg. Co., Saugatuck Iron Co.	
15	1	Yale student paper: "Home Town Industry"	1928
15	1	Unpublished manuscript: Bird family genealogy (describes a fulling mill)	1938
15	1	Article from <i>Connecticut Circle</i> re. Westport	1947
15	1	Unpublished manuscript: "Manufacturing in Westport" by Edward Myer	1975
15	1	Article: "Era of Blue-collar Jobs Drawing to a Close" – re. Willimantic Thread Co - <i>New York Times</i>	1984
15	1	Letters to George W. Adams re. cutting wood for his sawmill	n.d.
		Nash's Mill	
15	2	"Six Tons of Ice a Minute" <i>Westporter-Herald</i>	1903
15	2	"A History of Nash's Mill"	1973
		Old Mill at Sherwood Mill Pond	
15	3	"Historic Old Mill at Westport"	1930
15	3	"Now the Gates are Gone" <i>Town Crier</i>	1968
15	3	"Tidal Gate Repairs" <i>Westport News</i>	1977
15	3	"Mill Pond Once a Resource" <i>Westport News</i>	1980
15	3	"Oysters and Beer among decades of memories" <i>Westport News</i>	19801
15	3	Newspaper clipping: Old Mill	1982
15	3	"The Old Mill Pond" <i>Citizens' Bulletin</i>	1984
15	3	"DEP: State not responsible for mill pond deterioration" <i>Westport News</i>	1987

15	3	"Mill Pond Had Bounty of Oysters" <i>Westport News</i>	1988
15	3	"Spillway Receives a Band-Aid" <i>Westport News</i>	1988
15	3	"Captain Allen and the Mill Pond" <i>Carousel</i>	1990
15	3	"Mill Pond renovation completed" <i>Westport News</i>	1991
		Sipperly – Dorr-Oliver – Embalmers' Supply – Glendinning	
15	4	"Dorr-Oliver is Doing Something About It" <i>Mark</i>	1962
15	4	Brochure: Glendinning Companies Open House	1969
15	4	"Old local company getting facelift"	1984
15	4	"The Glendinning Company" <i>Westport News</i>	1987
15	4	Press release: MBI, Inc.	1989
15	4	"Office building has new look" <i>Westport News</i>	1995
15	4	"The Dorr Mill Scene"	n.d.
15	4	"Testing that Pays Dividends" Dorr Company	n.d.
15	4	"Embalming considered good for environment" Embalmers' Supply Co.	n.d.
15	4	Map: Glendinning property – hand-sketched	n.d.

Series 4: Shipping Records

These records consist primarily of original notebooks that record shipping transactions – products shipped, costs, etc. A volunteer transcribed many of the notebooks, writing out the names on sheets of lined paper, which are in the boxes along with the notebooks. The notes related to this project by Jane Cox Edmundson are in Box 16. The records are arranged by the name of the boat.

Box	Folder	.	Date
		James K. Polk	
16	1	"Sales books" (3' x 5"): 1854 July 7 – Trip 14 1856 March 20 – Trip 1	
16	2	"Shipping books" (3' x 5') 1853 May 19 – Trip 9 1856 July 15 – Trip 13 1856 August 19 – Trip 19	
16	3	1857 June 24 – Trips 16, 17 1857 September 9 – Trip 27 1857 September 15 – Trip 28	-
16	4	1857 October 15 – Trips 31, 32 1859 May 3 – Trip 9 1859 May 10 – Trip 10	
16	5	1859 May 24 – Trip 12 1859 August – Trip 18 1859 September 6 – Trip 20	
16	6	1859 October 12 – Trip 25 1860 August 7 – Trip 23 1860 October 3 – Trip 31	

16	7	1860 October 9 – Trip 32 1860 November 14 – Trip 37 1863 September 29 – Trip 25	
16	8	1865 September 25 – Trip 24 1865 October 2 – Trip 25 1865 October 16 – Trip 27	
16	9	1867 October 15 – Trip 19 1868 May 19 – Trip 8 1868 May 26 – Trip 9	
16	10	1872 January 12 – Trip 1 1873 March 28 – Trip 2 1873 October 28 – Trip 14 1873 November – Trip 13 1873 November 26 – Trip 15	
16	11	1875 April 28 – Trip 2 1875 May 7 – Trip ? 1875 May 11 – Trip 3	
16	12	1875 October 12 – Trip 7 1880 December 16 – Trip 22 1880 December 19 - 1881 November 7	
16	13	Large account book (related to James K. Polk?)	1857-1860
16	14	Transcripts of James K. Polk sales/shipping notebooks	1850s
16	15	Transcripts of James K. Polk shipping notebooks	1860s
16	16	Transcripts of James K. Polk shipping notebooks	1870s- 1880s
16	17	Transcript of large account book	
		None Such	
17	1	Sales book: 1850 – Trips 38, 39 Shipping books: 1851 – Trip 22 1852 – Trip 16	
17	2	Transcripts of sales/shipping notebooks of None Such	
		Lyman Jenison	
17	3	Sales book: 1854 November 8 – Trip 32 and transcript	
		Sarah B. Bulkley	
17	4	Shipping book: 1875 – Trip 3	
17	5	Transcript of Sarah B. Bulkley notebook and transcripts of missing notebooks	
		Middletown	
17	6	Shipping books: 1845 – Trip 5 1845 January – Trip 6? 1846 July 20 – Trip 23 1846 October 8 – Trip ? 1846 – Sloop Middletown books bound together in reverse order – Trips 11, 12, 13, 114, 16, 18, 20	
17	7	Transcripts of Middletown notebooks	
		Intrepid	
17	8	Shipping books	
17	9	Transcripts of Intrepid shipping books	
		Unidentified boat	

17	10	Sales book, n.d. and transcript	
		Miscellaneous records Many of these files came from the collection of Dorothea Malm.	
18	1	Lists of names and biographical notes re. Westport sea captains	
18	2	Notecards, lists, notes re. ships built in or sailing out of Fairfield, Norwalk, and Saugatuck	
18	3-4	Miscellaneous notes re. ships, captains, cod fisheries	
18	5	Typescript paper "Sea Captains of Westport" by Eileen Meyerson, WHS Untitled typescript description of market boat business in Westport in the 1800s	1976, n.d.
18	6	Clippings and excerpts from published works re. shipping	
18	7	Fragments, notes; letter of C.N. Allen to his father (1882 - "removed from Gideon Allen's book Schooner <i>Lewiscup</i> "); letter on Hudson River Transportation Co letterhead (1862 – from "BBS")	

Series 5: Westport Bar Association Records

These records provide a snapshot of the activities of the Westport Bar Association during the 1970s and 1980s. The correspondence files are primarily those of the presidents and secretaries of the Association during the time periods noted.

Box	Folder		Date
		Governance records	
19	1	Constitution and By-Laws	1977, n.d.
19	2	Lists of members of the Association	1971-1980
19	3	Lists of officers	1975-1982
19	4-6	Minutes of Executive Committee	1971-1982
19	7	Minutes of Bar Association and of Board of Directors	1973, 1979-1980
19	8	Treasurers reports	1978-1981
19	9	Committees: Nominating Committee	1975
19	10	Committees: Committee on Advertising	1977
		Correspondence	
19	11	Albert Harlow files	1970-1972
19	12	Edgar See files	1972
19	13	Richard Diviney files	1973-1975
19	14	Albert Harlow files	1974
19	15-16	Robert Scholl files	1975-1976
20	1	Edward Capasse files	1976-1977
20	2	Thomas Keenan files	1977
20	3	Richard Berkowitz files	1977
20	4	James A. Miller files	1977-1978
20	5	Thomas Keenan files	1978
20	6-8	Richard Berkowitz files	1978-1979
20	9	Edward Karazin files	1979-1980
20	10-11	Edward Capasse files	1979-1980
20	12-13	James A. Miller files	1981

20	14	Jerry Davidoff files	1982
21	1-3	Amy Y. Day files	1985-1987
		Topics	
21	4	Awards: Leo B. Shipley Award	1972, 1979, 1985
21	5	Awards: Liberty Bell Award	1980
21	6	Re. Certificate of Title	
21	7	Davidson and Spirer Law Review	1978
21	8-9	Law Day	1980, 1986
21	10	Lawyer Referral Services	1978-1983
21	11-13	Legal Aid / Fairfield County Legal Services	1973-1977
21	14	Staples High School internship	
21	15	Re. Zoning regulations	1977-1978