

Town of Westport Historian
Annual Report 2006

2006 marked the 191st year of the Town of Westport, it having been founded in 1815.

The fifth year of this historian's work was completed. My activities were centered around the traditional work of an historian—research, and preservation of the history of our town and its peoples, and the sharing of such.

I researched and responded to many inquiries involving former families of the hamlets of Westport and Wadhams. Information on a variety of different names was requested. Queries included the names of: Passino, Bacon, Osborne, Sherman, Hatch, Trombley, Davis, Lee, Merrow, Scott, Junior, Blongy, Sisco, Thurber, Carey, Worman, Shattuck, Potter, Merriam, Walker, Reese, Holcomb and Coon Mountain Bill.

Some other inquiries involved places/buildings that did or do exist here. These questions involved the Mountain Spring Company, the Westport Hotel, the Jeannette Marx house, the Barber Point Lighthouse, the Grange, Garfield/Walker Sawmill, the cemetery off Arsenal Road, and Merriam's Forge. Several inquiries involved burial sites of persons in the cemeteries of our town.

I assisted the Heritage House Committee by researching names of the earliest residents of our town, and providing them with photos of Dora James and the plaque on the James Bridge.

I compiled scrapbooks of newspaper clippings from the Valley News and the Plattsburgh Press Republican for the years 2004, 2005, and 2006. One copy of each will be kept in the Town Vault, and one copy of each, with this board's approval, will be given to the Westport Historical Society.

From the Essex County Clerk's Office, I obtained copies of "Certificates of Incorporation" that were filed by Westport businesses from 1853-1955.

I have begun an electronic newsletter, to be published quarterly. It will be sent to persons who ask for it to be sent to their email address. The newsletter includes a cover feature, a bit of genealogy of one of Westport's early families, information about books and websites helpful for researching Westport's history, an obituary of one of our early settlers and a "Do you know" question that will be answered somewhere in the newsletter. The first issue was sent out earlier this month with 5 subscribers. A notice of its availability has been posted on the door upstairs, on the bulletin board downstairs and on the Town Website.

I photographed the stones in the Merriam Cemetery, the Barber Cemetery, and the St. Philip Neri Catholic Cemetery. I am in the process of transcribing the inscriptions on

these stones. When finished, I will add them to the file of Westport Cemetery transcriptions that I currently have and, also, I will make them accessible to other researchers by uploading them to <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nyessex/> and to www.findagrave.com.

I have continued the historical bulletin board I started last year in the lower level of the Town Hall. The current one has some pictures and old newspaper articles about the wreck of the steamship Champlain which occurred in 1875. Others during the year included Westport's Claim to Baseball Fame: Case Patten and Hotels of the Past.

Anyone who has old pictures of Westport is welcome to bring them in to the town office to share. (We will scan them and then return the originals to you.)

It was a privilege to serve the town during 2006, and I am looking forward to 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty White
Town Historian