

A scenic view of a golf course in Westport, New York. In the foreground, a large, mature tree stands on a green lawn. To the right, a two-story clubhouse with a grey roof and yellow walls is visible. In the background, a blue lake with several sailboats is nestled between green hills under a clear sky.

**Walking Tour of
Westport, New York**



Lake Champlain

Walking Routes through Westport:

-  **Waterfront:** page 5 - .3 miles, elevation change: 70'
-  **North Loop:** page 7 - 2.5 miles, elevation change: 150'
-  **South Loop:** page 12 - 2 miles, elevation change: 200'

Cycling or Driving Routes:

- Barber Point & Raymond's Mills Loop:** page 25 -  7 miles
- Wadhams:** page 27 -  8 miles  .5 miles, elevation change: 50'

Detail of Start





The historic Baptist Church, built after fire destroyed the first church, now the Westport Heritage House, serves as a visitor information center along the Lakes to Locks Passage Scenic Byway. Photograph by Virginia Westbrook.

This tour will guide you through the evolution of Westport from its early industrial and agricultural beginnings to a summer resort that has responded to dramatic changes in expectations for rest and recreation over the course of a century and a half.

Overview

Begin the tour at Heritage House, the historic Baptist Church¹ (1877) on **Main Street** where welcoming ambassadors, exhibits and video interviews offer the best introduction to Westport. Cross the street to Ballard Park to get your bearings.

The view from **Ballard Park^{2*}** embraces Lake Champlain, the life blood of this town, the source of its prosperity, identity, and even its name. Westport grew outward from this intersection in a pattern visible in the style and form of the buildings along this self-guided tour. Federal and Greek Revival-style houses occupy the nearest lots. Mid-nineteenth-century homes filled in spaces between earlier buildings, and spread out beyond the town center. The fire of 1876 destroyed all the buildings on these two central blocks, so structures at the center of town date from the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Sponsored by the Westport Chamber of Commerce to commemorate the 250th anniversary of William Gilliland's pioneer settlement in 1765 and the Bicentennial of the Town of Westport, founded in 1815.

* Indicates site of historic marker. Homes are identified by name or by original owner, where possible, with construction dates in parentheses. Superscript number is the map number.

Architectural Style Guide



Federal Style - 1790-1820/40

Primary house form for the first fifty years of the Republic: Simple box with five-bay facade, symmetrical windows, paired end chimneys, decorative moldings, fan lights set in elaborate front door surround.



Greek Revival - 1830-1850

Sometimes called the National style; spread by carpenter's guides and pattern books: Pediments and pillars derived from monuments of ancient Greece to invoke the roots of democracy simplified to cornices in vernacular versions, porches or porticos supported by columns, doorways flanked with side lights & often transom lights.

Gothic Revival - 1840-1860

First of the Romantic styles to supplant Greek popularity, drawing on Medieval design vocabulary. Introduced by architects in style books: steeply-pitched roofs & steep gables with decorative bargeboard decoration, windows extend into gables, can have pointed arches or molding caps, one-story porches common with flattened gothic arches.



Italianate - 1840-1875

Romantic style derived from Italian forms: two or three stories, low-pitched roof with overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets, often in pairs, narrow windows, often in pairs with large panes, with elaborate crowns, square cupola with large panes or tower not uncommon.





French Second Empire - 1855-1885

Stimulated by exhibitions of the latest French architecture in 1855 and 1867, this style is characterized by a Mansard (dual-pitched, hipped) roof with overhanging eaves supported by brackets, narrow windows with elaborate crowns; cupolas and towers are common.



Stick - 1860-1890

Draws on Medieval English building traditions with steep-pitched gables and overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends; emphasis on decorative treatment of wall surfaces interrupted with boards ("stick") applied in horizontal, vertical or diagonal patterns.



Queen Anne - 1880-1910

The most exuberant and most popular of the Victorian styles with an asymmetrical plan and façade with dominant front gable, steeply-pitched roof, patterned shingles, towers, single-story porches with spindle work decorations or grouped columns.

Colonial Revival - 1890-1955

Expression of renewed interest in American antiquities triggered by the Centennial Celebration (1876): Symmetrical façade; accentuated front door, often with crown supported by pilasters or an entry porch with pillars; windows often in adjacent pairs.



Bungalow - 1900-1935

Favorite form for early twentieth-century residential neighborhoods: one and a half stories, low-pitched roof with broad overhanging eaves, large front porch with columns supported on masonry piers.



American Four-square - 1900-1920

Two story four-square plan with low-pitched, hipped roof with front dormer; styling varies, but Colonial Revival most common; broad porch supported by columns; entry either centered or off to one side.





The house built by David Clark (1875) overlooks freight houses and sheds at Clark's Wharf, c. 1930. Raymond C. Clark photograph courtesy of Bill Johnston.

When James Allen owned the steamboat wharf (1854-1870), he created a channel so he could float supply boats up to the rear of his store located on Main Street, at lake level on the south side of Hoisington Brook. Washington St (formerly Mill St) follows the course of Allen's mini-canal.

Waterfront

.3 MILES - Walk down **Washington Street** to the Marina.

Raymond Clark, whose family owned the wharf for two generations, called this “dock hill.” He was born in his grandfather **David Clark's house,³** (1875) on the right just above the Marina. The Clark family traded in lumber, coal, brick and other building materials.

Westport's first wharf, at the foot of Washington Street brought the goods of the world to Westport and the products of Westport to the world for more than a century. Its name changed with the proprietors, but the activity never flagged. Ferries carried passengers to and from the Vermont shore. Canal boats brought loads of coal and left with lumber, iron, bricks, wool, hay and other farm produce. Steam-powered “line boats” stopped here on daily runs from one end of the lake to the other, or on excursions filled with holiday-makers. The *Ticonderoga*, the last great steamboat on the lake, came home to this dock every night from 1907 until 1924.

When the Clarks sold the dock to Giroux & Adams (1939) almost all commercial boat traffic had ceased, but recreational boating was on the rise.

The new owners replaced the buildings with a large storage shed for personal watercraft (1941). They built a marine railway, repaired the cribbing and added a broad boardwalk around the building. Three changes of ownership later, the Carrolls have created a full-service **marina**⁴. They replaced the marine railway with a travel lift, added shower facilities and renovated the arch-roofed “hanger” as a mechanic shop, marine store, offices and a restaurant serving boaters and summer visitors. The Westport Marina commands a view of many shoreline features.

To the south (RIGHT) of the Marina stood the Norway Furnace (1869). The Lake Champlain Ore and Iron Company planned to build a tram road to bring ore from the Norway Bed, in the Iron Ore Tract, five miles away, but the enterprise was soon abandoned (1871). Fifty years later, a group of investors hired architect Russell Whitehead to design a Yacht Club alongside a **new dock**⁵ (1939). Regattas, swimming events, dances, and costume parties kept summer folks well entertained. The building burned (1982). Today the traditional French Bistro du Lac offers dining in a replica building on the dock in summer.

To the north (LEFT), the other **commercial wharf**⁶, built by Ebenezer Douglas (1828) extends far out into the lake. Douglas built a brick store above his dock. He also made potash, dealt in lumber and operated cargo vessels. D.L. Allen extended the dock to its present length when he bought it (1845). D. F. Payne bought it from Allen (1880) the same year that he added a fourth hearth to his forge at Wadhams Mills.



Courtesy of the Gretna Longware collection, Adirondack History Museum.

When Daniel F. Payne bought this wharf, he controlled most of the iron and lumber production at Wadhams Mills along with interests in “rolling and slitting” mills and the nail factory near the ferry dock in Essex. Business at the wharf slacked off after Payne turned his attention to producing electricity (1904).



Elizabeth Lee leads tours around Westport. Here, she examines the Sisco Furnace ruin at Normandy Beach Club. Photograph by Virginia Westbrook.

The base of Sisco Furnace (1847) still stands. It could produce up to nine tons of pig iron per day with a continuous blast that lit up the bay at night. The company town, called “Jacksonville,” included worker housing, offices, a store and homes for Mr. Jackson and the company book-keeper.

David Erit rebuilt the dock (1920), dredging a channel out into Northwest Bay so he could run a steam ferry across the lake to Arnold’s Bay. A few years later (1929) the Lake Champlain Bridge, joining Crown Point with Addison, Vermont, put most of the ferries on the south end of the lake out of business.

Across the bay, the Sisco Farm hosted religious camp meetings before the iron furnace left its mark on Furnace Point. Camp Normandie hosted campers there for many years before it became a family resort.

Walk north along the lake shore. At Lee Park⁷, where Hoisington Brook meets the lake, cross the pedestrian bridge under the James Bridge to explore the quiet, shady nature trail.

No evidence remains of the mills that once stood by this stream, named for the man who created two ponds for impounding water to run the mills. Barnabas Myrick operated a saw mill, a tannery, and an ashery that produced potash, a key cash crop in the early nineteenth century. He also owned forges in Wadhams. **Myrick** built his **house⁸** (1818), on the hill at the corner of Main Street and Champlain Avenue. It served as the Union School (1864) for twenty five years, until the Town built a “new school” (1889) below the Federated Church.

Climb the slope to Main Street, by the Lee Park monument.*

Take a moment to observe how geography has shaped this community. Hoisington Brook forms a natural divide, marked by the bridge. The waterpower potential of the brook determined that industry would locate here. The two wharfs determined where freight would arrive or depart. As a consequence, Westport developed two commercial centers, one on either side of Hoisington Brook.

The stones facing the highway bridge came from the earlier stone arch bridge, replaced in 1978. **James Bridge⁹** is named for Dora James, who ran the nearby Lee Park Restaurant for many years.

At this point, you can choose to turn left to follow the North Loop along Champlain Avenue, and up to the Fairgrounds and Depot (2.5 miles) or go right (and turn to page 14) to follow the South Loop down Main Street (and back) and around Orchard Terrace (2.3 miles).



The stone grist mill rose three stories up from its wharf at lake level. The shoreline section of Washington Street, formerly Mill Street, follows the course of James Allen's delivery canal. Photograph courtesy of Bradamant Realty.



Firemen hung wet hoses in the tower of the "Old Hose House" to dry them after a fire. The bell that hung in an adjacent belfry was moved to the new fire station (1960) on Champlain Avenue. Photograph by Virginia Westbrook.

North Loop

2.5 MILES - From the bridge, proceed north up the **Main Street** hill.

The rambling structure at the corner of Marks Road has a long history of service to travelers, beginning as a wheelwright shop. Mell Lott ran a **stable and livery**¹⁰ (c. 1900) here in the early years of the twentieth century, with a wagon painting and repair shop in the loft and a blacksmith shop out back. It served as a gas station until 1996.

Turn right on **Champlain Avenue**.

Richards & Weed's Hotel, a very popular public house, dominated this commercial district for many years. After it burned (1893), small shops quickly filled in the empty space. A real estate office next to **Ernie's Market**¹¹, housed the telephone switch-board for a time. **Chazy-Westport Telephone Company**¹² built their first building (1958) to handle the "new" dial phone system. They added a new wing (1971) when long distance direct dialing came in. Farther along, the **Town Office Building**¹³ (1928) hosted school events and basketball games, movies and roller skating. Built by the Lake View Grange (no. 970), this building had the largest

meeting room in town, hosting public functions, school plays and even basketball games.

Further down the street, the high-style Italianate **D. L. Allen store¹⁴** (1878) just beyond Marks Road was built two years before he sold his wharf to Daniel Payne. A later owner, David Erit, also ran the store and wharf together, in the 1920s.

Turn down Marks Road.

At the bend in Marks Road, Fleur de Lys Lane takes its name from the **Marks' "Cottage"¹⁵** at the end. William D. Marks built this summer home with his wife, Jeanette Holmes, who came from France. An underground passage from the lake shore to the cellar has given rise to many stories of hiding runaway slaves, or perhaps bootlegging. More likely, the tunnel was dug to move coal directly from a barge to the basement when Marks' daughter, Jeanette, installed a furnace (1938). Jeanette Marks taught for many years at Mount Holyoke College. She retired here with her

companion, Mary C. Woolley, who had served nearly forty years as President of the College. Both are buried at the rear of **Hillside Cemetery²⁵** on upper Main Street.

Return to Main Street, turn right and walk to the intersection. Note that Sisco Street aligns with the road to the wharf. Proceed up the hill to the school and fairgrounds.

This was a very busy intersection when the wharf was in business, a century ago. Wagons loaded with cargo lined up, waiting to unload, reloaded and carried inbound cargo away.

Near the top of Sisco Street, **Westport Central School¹⁶** (1932-33, 1953-55) occupies a prominent place in both the geography and the history of the community. From the beginning, Westport ensured a basic education for all children, who could attend the nearest District School, but instruction past the eighth grade was limited to students within reach of the Union School, in the village. The Central School brought them all together at last, with reliable transportation to get them there, in the midst of the Great Depression.



Horace Moses made a gift to Essex County of the Junior Achievement Building¹⁹ (1924), to instruct young people in manual arts and crafts. Cooperative Extension and 4-H programs have their home here. Photograph courtesy of Westport Library.

Agricultural Extension agent, Ray Bender, grew a test crop of Trefoil seeds in 1938. It proved so well-suited to the heavy soils of the Valley that farmers formed a cooperative (1948) to market seed. The business did well for many years until Red River farmers in North Dakota undersold the Champlain Valley.

Agrarian Enterprises

The Essex County Fair moved to this location in 1885, following fifteen years down by the lake on Old Arsenal Road. Amidst the excitement of fair-time, with games, rides, gypsy fortune tellers and the rest, no one has ever lost track of the point of the fair: improvements in agriculture, particularly livestock breeding. The harness track recalls the investment Essex County farmers made in breeding Morgan horses, called “the Black Hawk horses” after the original sire. **Floral Hall¹⁷** (1885), listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005, has hosted exhibits of women’s handiwork and cookery acumen for four generations.

Cross Main Street and walk towards the railroad overpass.

Commercial agriculture activities clustered near the railroad, adjacent to the fairgrounds. The **Champlain Valley Mill¹⁸** (1952), next to Spooner’s Garage, began as the seed mill for the Champlain Valley Seed Growers Cooperative when Birdsfoot Trefoil had become the new cash crop for Essex County farmers. The Cooperative sold the mill to Sam Sherman (1985) who has since developed the largest Certified Organic mill in the Northeast, producing fine flour and cracked grain from many organic grains.

Across Main Street, at the far end of the fairgrounds, a low tile building housed a **Veterinary Hospital & Wildlife Rehabilitation Center²⁰**. Thomas Lee built a bottling plant on the site (c. 1900) to market Westport Mountain Springs water for shipment to guests of the Westport Inn. Just before the overpass, the **Westport Hotel²¹**, built as The Gates (1876), has been accommodating travelers since the railroad came to town.

The stick-style **railroad Depot²²** (1876) on the other side of the tracks stands as a monument to cooperative community historic preservation. For sixty years, three or four trains each way, per day, stopped in Westport. Passengers disembarked from New York, Albany and Montreal, bound for holidays in Westport, Elizabethtown or Lake Placid, or headed to the landing to catch a steamboat. Train travel then gave way to automobiles. When passenger service lapsed (1971), the Delaware and Hudson Railroad Company sold the building to the AuSable Chasm Corporation to use as a museum. But moving the building cost too much, so Town Supervisor, Walter P. Huchro, offered to buy it back for a dollar.

Mr. Huchro and the Westport Historical Society had in mind a museum and visitor center. Others in town saw more dramatic possibilities. All combined their efforts. By the time Amtrak resumed passenger service, the dream of a Depot Theatre was taking shape. The baggage shed became a theatre for summer plays and readings and the passenger lobby a gallery of local artists' work.

Retrace your steps and continue straight on Main Street.



The Dairymen's League took over the bottling plant (1927) when the local chapter joined the cooperative effort to get fair prices for milk. The building burned (1943), to be replaced by the current structure (1947), used by the League until it disbanded (1961). Photograph Courtesy of Betty White.

The Fairgrounds complex, listed on the National Register of historic places, includes a race track, judges' stand, grand stand and Floral Hall, built in the 1880s, with barns & exhibition buildings typical of an early 20th-century county fair.



The Roman Catholic congregation began framing up their church the same year they organized (1857), in the midst of a nation-wide financial panic. Photograph courtesy of Betty White.

Three upper Main Street homes, (6615, 6624, & 6536) came from Montgomery Ward's. The Wardway Homes catalog gave each design a name, but accounts from carpenters who put these homes together do not include that information.

Commercial and residential structures mingle along this stretch of Main Street. On the right stands the stunningly modern **St. Philip Neri Roman Catholic Church²³** (1980) that replaced the first church (1880) after it burned. Stained glass windows salvaged from the ruin shaped the architecture of the new church. Across the street, **Father McCarthy Parish Hall²⁴** memorializes Westport's most beloved Irish priest. The Catholic cemetery lies behind the church, the protestant graveyard, **Hillside Cemetery²⁵**, just beyond it. If you wander among the gravestones, you may find some familiar names, now that you have met so many local folks. **Adams' Hardware²⁶**, on the left began as a retail outlet for the wharf owners, Adams and Giroux. Storage buildings in the rear date from its years as a lumber yard. For three generations this was the "go to" place for tools and building supplies.

Further down, the sidewalk shifts to the left side of the street because the Hoisington Brook ravine crowds the road. **Everybody's Market²⁷**, on the right at the curve of the road, was formerly a Grand Union grocery, and before that, George Eastman's hardware store and Buick dealership. A blacksmith shop came next down the slope, then the **Hose House²⁸**, which has been a restaurant for many years. Philip Gardner's drug store, now the **Westport Trading Company²⁹**, next to the park, had a poolroom downstairs.

South Loop

2.0 MILES - Cross the brook and continue south on **Main Street**.

Before the new highway bridge went in (1978), the road took a sharp turn just south of the brook. Highway engineers rounded the corner, smoothed the grade, and changed the course of the side street. They also discovered a rare Paleo Indian spear point not far from the lake shore.

A Methodist Society had been active for twenty years before the members could afford to build a church (1834). The stone came across the lake from Button Island by barge. After the Civil War, the congregation added 20 feet to the east end and built the ornate corner bell tower. The congregation joined with the Baptists to form the **Federated Church**³⁰ (1934).

The **brick house**³¹ (1832), on the opposite hill, stood in the path of the 1978 bridge project, but the owner had it moved. Judge Charles Hatch purchased it (1833) from Aaron Mack and lived there until he died (1856). Hatch, one of Westport's "founding fathers," had built the **house next door**³² (1825) on the site of his first home. Classic Federal form and style anchors both houses firmly in the earliest stage of Westport history. Many prominent people in town affairs lived in this house: Daniel F. Payne, Melvin Lott, owner of the livery just beyond the bridge and Ben Worman who served as first president of the bank across Main Street.



The "new school" (1889), located on the hill below the stone church, replaced the old Myrick House with two floors of light and spacious classrooms for both "upper" and "lower" school students. Image courtesy of Jessica Roemischer .

The monument to Pastor Cadman commemorates the Union Summer Services that brought ministers from all over the country to preach during the summer. (1929-41)*



Image courtesy of Betty White.

The fire of 1876 started in the stables of Persons' Lake House, then spread south to engulf two homes, a tin shop and the Baptist Church before a wind shift drove it across Main Street into the commercial block. The fire of 1936 destroyed four buildings including the ice cream parlor, the post office, a grocery, and a soda fountain.

John Tyler Cutting also helped fund the library's Cutting Memorial Hall (1907) because he had such fond childhood memories of the place.

A faux-log structure, built as an **Insurance office**³³ (1945), the most recent structure on the block, now serves as the office for CATS, Champlain Area Trails. Stop in for information about trails in the area. Next to that stands the only **store**³⁴ (1830s-40s) that survived the 1876 fire. The elf-like cap at peak of the roof, supported a pulley for hoisting merchandise. A series of grocery and drug stores occupied the place until a Montgomery Ward catalog store moved in (1967). The first **Lake Champlain National Bank building**³⁵ (1908) was originally only one bay wide. This bank merged with the one in Willsboro in 1959 to form Champlain National Bank. After the fire of 1936, the bank had room to add a two-bay addition (1981). After the second fire, Sara Richards built the **one-story brick building**³⁶ with its modest decorative cornice.

The choice of brick for the adjacent **three-store block**³⁷ (1877) also represents a practical fire deterrent. Italianate design elements firmly date the structure, even if the fire did not. It closely resembles the **Inn at Westport**³⁸ (1877), on the opposite corner. Known as "Over the Way" when it was part of the Westport Inn, it served as guest accommodations, a brokerage house an antique store, and also housed musicians from the Westport Inn Orchestra and other hotel staff.

The open space on the west side of Main Street also represents recovery from the 1876 fire. Ten years later, Freeborn & Ann Page, who lived in Judge Hatch's house, sold the lot to the Westport Library Association on condition that the open space in front of the new library be maintained as a park. Townsfolk helped to clear the remains of the Person's Lake House hotel. Miss Alice Lee took great interest in the project, assisting with fund-raising efforts for both the **Westport Library**³⁹ (1888) and the Cutting Memorial Hall addition (1907). Cutting Hall served as the social center for the town for half a century, hosting Firemen's suppers and Masonic balls, lectures, church fairs, movies and plays, and the Camp Dudley Annual Show at the end of every summer. School sports, social events and commencement exercises took place here until the Central School opened (1933).

Return to Ballard Park.

Take a few minutes to enjoy the captivating view of Lake Champlain and the formal garden, beautifully restored by the Trustees of **Ballard Park**² (2002). The Westport Inn commanded this same view of the Green Mountains, anchored by Camel's Hump to the north. Many wealthy guests of the Inn loved the view so much that they, or their descendants, built private summer homes along the lake shore.



Gray's Atlas of Essex County, published in 1876, details these shops, lost to fire in August of that year, because the information had already gone to press. Photograph courtesy of Westport Library.

Wally Huchro was the last of a series of pharmacists to practice in the corner drug store. He kept the store open late during the summer so that staff from the Westport Inn could stop in at the soda fountain after they got off work at 9 p.m.



The Westport Inn rose three stories above its prominent position on the hill, sheltering croquet and tennis courts, on terraces stepping down toward the lake. Image courtesy of Westport Library.

Miss Lee's brother, Thomas, had pipes laid to bring water from "Mountain Spring," at the edge of the Iron Ore Tract down to the hotel. Thomas bottled the water for sale to hotel guests. The waterworks eventually grew into the town water supply.

Westport Inn

The Westport Inn, remembered as a lively and glamorous hotel, occupied this entire space for eighty years (1887-1966). The Inn attracted summer guests from all over the world. They came to escape the heat, humidity and dangerous diseases that beset their urban homes. Here, they found comfortable accommodation, fresh food, clean air and a vast array of entertainments. Westport had hotels before this. In fact, the Marvin House, an enlarged version of John Halstead's original tavern, formed the core of the original Inn. But the Westport Inn operated from June to October, catering to wealthy families who could afford to come for a week, a month, or the entire season.

Miss Alice Lee purchased Marvin House in 1887 and set about transforming it, and the surrounding property, into a pleasure grounds. She had unsightly buildings on Main Street removed, along with tenements down by the lake left by the Lake Champlain Ore and Iron Company. She hired a series of managers who spent the next decade revising the structure so thoroughly that nothing remained of the Marvin House. They added a dining hall with rooms above, a grand verandah wrapping around three sides of the building, and a music and dance hall. Additional "cottages" were added to the property, along with a boathouse on the lake shore, gardens, tennis and croquet courts, the 6-hole

Westport Golf Links up above Congress Street and the annex on the other side of Main Street.

Walk south on Main Street.

South along Main Street, cottages associated with the Westport Inn still recall the bye-gone grace of that era: **Garden Cottage⁴⁰**, just beyond the restored gardens, at the corner of Old Arsenal Road and, behind it, **Knolls Cottage⁴¹**, **The Gables⁴²**, next to Heritage House and, at the corner of Liberty Street, the **Corner Cottage⁴³** also known as the Music Room after the music wing of the Inn was moved to the rear of the Golf Links Club House. A carriage shop run by J. N Barton occupied this corner in the mid 1800s. The front half of the building served as the Club House for the Golf Links.



Westport Inn Boathouse provided design inspiration for the Ballard Park performance pavilion, pictured on the cover of this tour brochure. Photograph courtesy of Westport Library.



After the Sherwoods built and moved to Skenewood, on Dudley Road, Beech Hill became an inn, run by Mollie McCarthy. From A View of Westport on Lake Champlain by Raymond C. Clark, 1972.

Farmhouse inns stand on the west side of Main Street while private homes built by wealthy summer residents line the lake shore on land that had been farm fields before the railroad came to town. Summer residents patronized the Westport Inn, the Yacht Club and the Westport Library.

Main Street

Although the **Westport Inn** could host a hundred and fifty guests, plus many more in several surrounding cottages, it could not meet the entire demand for summer guests here in Westport. As you continue down Main Street, you will pass many present and former inns and summer homes, sitting high on the hill overlooking Northwest Bay and commanding excellent views of the lake and distant Vermont mountains. On the return, you can learn of year-round residents who lived in the earlier, modest homes of Westport.

The high-style Victorian house, first on the right, provides a stunning example of how profoundly buildings can change over time. The original building (1858) was a simple vernacular Greek Revival home. Twenty years later, the owners updated the facade in French Second Empire style with a central tower and mansard roof. A porch with Queen Anne design elements was added in the 1890s. After years of neglect, a late 20th-century owner restored the home as a bed and breakfast called the **Victorian Lady**⁴⁴.

“Rolling Hills”⁴⁵ (c.1878), at the first crest of the sidewalk, retains that name from its days as a summer boarding house, in the 1940s. Israel Pattison built the house (1870s) in high-style Italianate fashion soon after he sold lakeshore property to

the Lake Champlain Ore and Iron Company. He repossessed the property when the company folded (1871). The Federal Style shingled **farmhouse**⁴⁶ next door (1832) became a summer residence during the late nineteenth century.

James and Mary Worman turned the seasonal pattern on its head while they owned **"Bonnycroft"**⁴⁷ (c.1860) at the beginning of the twentieth century. Mary's father, Daniel F. Payne bought the house as a wedding gift for his daughter. The Wormans used this house in winter and moved down the hill to "Sunnyside," down by the lake for the summer. More recently, Dr. Frank Tannenberger carried on his veterinary practice in a clinic behind the house. Further on, **Beech Hill**⁴⁸ (1836) sits far back from the road, where the views stretch westward as well as eastward. The first owner, Rev. William Hickox built the central portion of the house in stone with ornamented Gothic Revival gables. Later, the Sherwoods enlisted their architect friend, Stanford White, to design the south wing in the same style.

Out where the sidewalk ends, **"Mt Pleasant"**⁴⁹ (1870-1890) served as an inn for summer visitors from its beginning. Over the years, innkeepers Lowe and Anna Fuller added more rooms and a dining area. Around 1900, they built an annex with thirty additional rooms at the rear of the property. Across the road, sited well below street level, stands **"Windward"**⁵⁰ (1906), which served a series of owners as a grand summer home. A seasoned inn-keeper, W J Dyke bought it (1949) and opened an inn, converting the stables and boathouse to guest cottages. Present owners purchased the adjacent property, Westport Vacation Land, removed the motel but retained the lake-shore cottages.



Farmers welcomed the cash income they could make from summer visitors by renting out rooms or building vacation cabins. Walker Farm Cabins were located north of Sisco Street near the present NYS boat launch. Image courtesy of Jessica Roemischer.

Turn around and retrace your steps.

Returning to town from the south, you can see how the houses begin to cluster, indicating the edge of the historic, or “pre-tourism” Westport, where Old Arsenal Road rejoins Main Street. Homes of middle class residents may be more modest, but they often exhibit recognizable design elements of whatever style was popular at the time. Most are “vernacular,” buildings constructed by local builders. The appeal of Westport’s Main Street arises, in part, from the fact that three generations of the Clark family worked as builders for more than sixty years, each son learning the trade from his father.

An interesting collection of folks lived in these houses. The Colonial Revival **Holt home**⁵¹ (#6401, c.1910), on the left, is one of many built on a house lot cut from the former Pattison Farm in the 1880s and 1890s. Gerald Forcier purchased the home in 1957, five years after he acquired the Westport, Essex & Lewis Telephone Company, parent company to Chazy Westport Communications, currently led by Gerald’s son, Jim Forcier.

The **Sheldon House**⁵² (1848) has been in the same family since its construction. Benjamin Mayhew Sheldon caught Gold Fever in 1855 and left for California with his sister and her husband. He started home two years later with \$5000, but his ship sank in a storm after leaving Havana. His widow took in laundry and boarders. Her unmarried daughter helped her stay in the house. Greek Revival styling on the **Loveland house**⁵³, next door dates the building (c.1830) although Colonial Revival features on the entry porch (c.1920) can trick the eye. Edward Osborne, who worked in his brother’s harness shop, took care of the Lovelands in their old age and became owner of the house after they died.

Gray’s Atlas of Essex County, N.Y., published in 1876 identifies **6415 Main Street**⁵⁴ (ca.1840) as belonging to J.E. Barnes. Barnes lost a leg at the Battle of Petersburg, Virginia, in 1864. The US Lighthouse Board had a policy of employing Civil War veterans, so Barnes became the first Keeper of the Barber Point Lighthouse (see p. 26), a job that came with a horse so that he could get to town for supplies. The lighthouse shut down when the lake iced over, so Barnes lived here during the winter months.

John Osborne⁵⁵ built the high-style Italianate house across the street (1849) when he started a harness-making business in town. William and Mary Richards lived in the next **house⁵⁶** (c. 1840), selling out to a Civil War veteran, Alvin Fair, just a few years before Richards' hotel burned (1893). An intervening home, now gone, was built by Dr. William H. Richardson when he returned from volunteering as a surgeon in the Army of the Potomac in Virginia during the Civil War (1865).

Continue on Main Street to Liberty Street and turn left.

Turn left on Country Club Way.

A shady road brings you to the **Westport Country Club⁵⁷** (c.1924), designed by architect Russell Whitehead, who owned a house nearby. Thomas Lee developed the first golf course here (1898) for the Westport Inn. Golf was such a novelty, then, that a 6-hole course delighted the guests. When John Wack bought the Inn (1920s), he invited Thomas Winton, a student of the famous

Scottish golf architect, Willie Park, to design an 18-hole course. In recent years, Winton's original features have been restored.

Return to Liberty Street, turn left and then right onto Congress Street.

A long driveway up the hill leads to the **Colonial Cottage⁵⁸** (1836), built by William Cutting in high Greek Revival style, with a full Greek portico supported by fluted Doric columns. When he built this house, Cutting owned the most expensive pew in the Baptist church, where he served as clerk, trustee and choir member. The Lake Champlain Ore and Iron Company bought the Cottage in 1869 to house its agent in charge of the Norway Furnace. The Lee family bought the property in 1900, to house overflow guests from the Westport Inn. The Greek revival **Sheldon Manor⁵⁹** (c.1850) has had three major additions of differing styles during the second half of the nineteenth century. Like many early summer places, this home became a year-round residence in the latter decades of the 20th century.

Cross **Stevenson Road** and proceed up the hill.

Charles **Eddy's** family occupied his **house⁶⁰** (1828) for 135 years. Charles and his brother, James ran a dry goods store on Main Street that burned in the great fire (1876). The house **next door⁶¹** (1828) was built for Elder Isaac Sawyer, the first preacher to serve the Baptist Society. A series of seven doctors and one dentist later lived in the house. Essex County Academy (1834), located just up the hill, built the rambling **shingled house⁶²** (1834) across the street as a dormitory. This private secondary school attracted serious students from throughout the Champlain Valley, as far as Canada. Further up the hill, the **Aaron Mack house⁶³** "Kimberlea" (1868) at the corner of Stevenson and Front Streets occupies a plot set aside from farmland that Mack had sold to Albert Carpenter four years earlier. Mack served as a trustee of the Essex County Academy and ran a dry goods store in the village. The architect Russell Whitehead bought the house and designed the interesting eastern addition.

Turn right onto **Front Street** and then right again onto **Orchard Terrace**.



*Perhaps the local carpenters created this remarkable Gothic Revival gable window because they were building the house for the Baptist preacher.
Photograph by Virginia Westbrook.*

Look up the hill to the stately brick Federal style house (1825) built by Platt Rogers Halstead, eldest son of Westport founding father, John. The first Baptist Meeting House (1830) stood opposite.



Sears draftsmen added a "Spanish flavor" to the classic American Four-square form and called it "Alhambra" for its California Mission style details. From the Sears Building Materials Catalog, 1924.



The Westport Library clock tower was added in 1908 along with the John Tyler Cutting Memorial Hall, which was removed in 1960. Image courtesy of Westport Library Association.

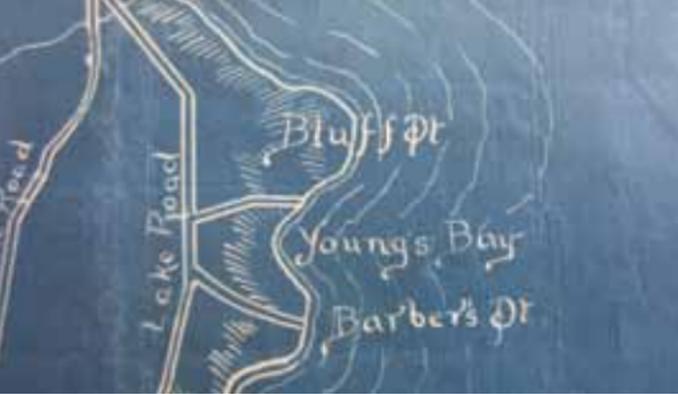
Orchard Terrace

Note the grey **Bungalow⁶⁴**, on the left, just beyond the intersection with Orchard Terrace and the American four-square house, first on the left on Orchard Terrace. These two house forms appear in many variations in this early twentieth-century neighborhood. On the **right⁶⁵**, (1923) a catalog house blends comfortably into the neighborhood. All the parts for this Mission Style home came by rail directly from Sears, Roebuck & Company with a hefty instruction book to guide assembly.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Benjamin Carpenter and A.J. Daniels sold land on the hill behind the library, divided into "Cottage Lots." Some roadways resemble driveways because the deeds for these lots stipulated that the homeowners take responsibility for connecting with the Town road.

Continue down Orchard Terrace for more variations on these architectural themes.

When you reach the Post Office (1961), continue down the hill to conclude this part of the tour on the Library Lawn.



Detail, Highways and Byways About Westport, touring map produced by Alice Lee for Westport Inn guests, 1900. Courtesy of the Adirondack History Museum.

In December 1859, a retinue of mourners brought John Brown's body across Lake Champlain on the Barber Ferry. They stopped for lunch at Person's hotel in Westport and spent the night in Elizabethtown on their way to bury Brown in North Elba (Lake Placid).

Barber Point/Raymond's Mills Loop

7 MILES - To tour William Gilliland's original land grant, "Bessboro," go south on **Main Street/9N** to the edge of the hamlet. Turn left on **Dudley Road**.

At the **stone schoolhouse*** at the crest of the hill, the vista opens to the west. The hills of the "Iron Ore Tract" rise abruptly from the farm fields in the southwest. Hopeful iron masters struggled for years to find a way to transport ore from that wild corner of the town, much of which remains passable only by snowmobile. This school served the earliest hamlet in Westport, settled by the Barber family and their relatives, the Frisbies (1785). The Barbers established a sail ferry that ran from Young's Bay to Arnold's Bay in Panton, Vermont. The Barber farm is one of only fifty Bicentennial Farms in New York State.

Continue south, take a left on **Barber Road**.

The **Barber Point Lighthouse** (1872) stands at the end of Barber Road. Its fifth-order Fresnel lens, 83 feet above the lake, could be seen for fifteen miles in both directions. In 1935, the Lighthouse Board replaced it with a skeletal steel

tower and sold the building. Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker, an Englishman knighted for his undercover service during World War II, owned the lighthouse for many years. He and his wife are better remembered for hosting neighbors at afternoon tea than for his memoir of running wartime covert operations, entitled *Setting Europe Ablaze* (1983).

Continue south on **Dudley Road**.

Just south of Barber Point lies **Camp Dudley***, named for Sumner Dudley, the YMCA volunteer known as the “father of YMCA camping”. Camp Dudley found a permanent home here in Westport in 1908 and has offered summer programs in the arts, athletics, outdoors and spirituality ever since.

At the end of Dudley Road, Raymond’s Brook empties into Coll’s Bay (misspelled on many maps and charts). On Coll Island, out in the bay, three Jesuit priests suffered the consequences of Indian captivity in 1642. Along the brook, Raymond’s sawmill anchored the only pre-Revolutionary settlement in **Westport***. Abandoned during the War,

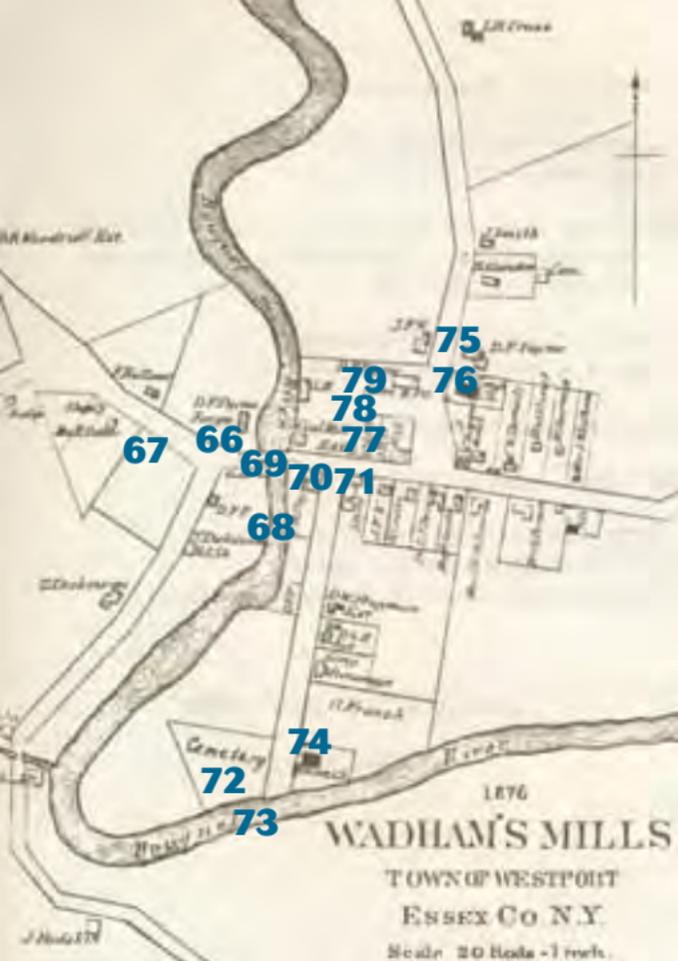
Raymond’s Mills sprang back to life after 1808 and grew into a substantial settlement with saw and grist mills, lime kilns, a blacksmith shop and brick yard.

Turn left on 9N and right onto **Napper Road**. After the railroad tracks, turn right onto **Stevenson Road**, returning to Westport by the “back way.”

At the end of the nineteenth century, James Graeff bought nine farms, consolidating 1600 Acres into Westport Farms. He built a creamery on Napper Road, producing milk and butter for the New York City market that was picked up by train at the end of the road. The stop, known as Graeff’s, also served as the drop-off point for Camp Dudley boys. Today, the manager of what is now known as “the old Marsh Farm” runs a Certified Organic dairy.



Lighthouse built by Lewis Clark of limestone quarried from Ligonier Point in Willsboro. Courtesy of Morris Glenn.



Wadhams

4 MILES NORTH ON ROUTE 22. WALKING TOUR .5 MILE

Park at the corner of **Route 22** and **Lewis-Wadhams Road**. Walk down hill. Stop midway across the bridge & look right.

The Boquet River falls forty feet over this granite cliff. The drop in elevation attracted the first settlers, who harnessed the waterpower to run their mills. The energy of falling water could power machinery. It could also tear a building off its foundations. Early mills did not last very long, but that did not deter men intent on harvesting the surrounding forests and making iron from nearby mines. As often happened in this region, the place changed names with the dominant millwright. Hence, “Coats Mills” became “Braman’s Mills” before settling on “Wadhams Mills.”



The “1831 Hotel” dominated the commercial center of Wadhams for nearly a century and a half. Inside, the Post Office, a harness shop and a store shared space with the hotel lobby. Farnsworth Hall, the second-floor dance hall, hosted formal holiday gatherings. Image courtesy of Evelyn Brant.

General Luman Wadhams bought John Coats' property and water rights at the Falls in the early 1820s. He built a sawmill and a house, established a Post Office and became its first Postmaster. He partnered with Barnabus Myrick to build the grist mill (1826) at the west end of the bridge, and built houses for some of his workmen. By that time, his namesake community was on the verge of becoming a boom town, further accelerated by the Champlain Canal (1823) which opened a water route between Lake Champlain and the Hudson River, allowing local manufacturers to reach US markets instead of having to ship to Canada. Wadhams' store (1832) also benefited from inexpensive transportation of his stock in trade.

These riverbanks held many mills over time. Saw mills stood on both sides of the stream (1825 & 1875), surrounded by piles of logs. The **Wadhams Free Library**⁶⁶ (founded 1897) moved to this former lumber storage yard in 1962 on land used for lumber storage until 1947. Three successive forges occupied the hill top on the left. On the right, on the site of an earlier blacksmith shop, a "coal mill" ground charcoal into "facings," used to line sand molds in

the casting of iron. On the other side of the bridge, grist mills (before 1815 & 1826) dominated the west bank for more than a century. The large **blue garage**⁶⁷ (1925) was a car dealership for years before Anson's dairy took it over.

Junk cars buried at the old gristmill site were dug up during the scrap metal drives of World War II.

Downstream, on the left, the last water-powered business still active in Wadhams supplies power to the electrical grid. Daniel F. Payne built this **generating station**⁶⁸ in 1904 to send electricity to iron mines in Mineville, eleven miles to the southwest. A large **penstock**⁶⁹ carries water to power the turbine from a dam above the falls. (Note the pressure relief stack next to the brick house.) The current owners revived the plant in 1979.

Walk back up to the Church Street intersection.



A flood in 1924 gutted the grist mill and carried away the machinery and millstones. Image courtesy of Evelyn Brant.

Cyrenius Payne built the **brick house**⁷⁰ on the corner (1839) with bricks that came from Thomas Hadley's brick yard across the river. He kept a store on the Church Street side with a "Tap Room" in the basement, which was at street level back then. Payne had married Eliza French, daughter of a substantial landowner. Their son, Daniel French Payne (b.1841) lost an arm while fighting in the Civil War. He bought Wadhams' son, William's property, land and mills after the war (1865), built a new sawmill, expanded the grist mill, and went on to build a substantial industrial empire.

Payne's store faced **Luman Wadhams store**⁷¹ (1832), across Church Street, because that was the main road into town at the time. From **Riverside Cemetery**⁷² at the end of the road, you can see the **stone abutments**⁷³ of the first bridge built across the Boquet. The cemetery has likely been in use since 1810. Frequent floods have carried away many headstones as well as remains. Next to it, the church that began as a **Union Church**⁷⁴ (1875), later became Methodist Episcopal (1893). The house next to it was the Congregational parsonage!

H. C. Avery expanded Wadhams' store in 1877 to begin a new general mercantile business. At that time, Wadhams Mills had four stores, three blacksmith shops, a cabinet shop, barber, two meat markets and a hotel. The Wadhams Mills Grange moved into the building (1911), sharing it with the Oddfellows. Large meetings and weekly square dances brought folks in from all the surrounding farms.



In 1866, the Congregationalists moved their church (1837) across the frozen mill pond to a more central location beside the 1831 Hotel. Image courtesy of Wadhams Free Library.

Continue up the hill and return to the parking area.

Toursim came in as industry waned. Private homes and farmsteads hosted summer visitors beginning in the early twentieth century. Cyrenius Payne's home became the Wadhams Hotel. Miss Rosetta Livingston leased the **Payne/Wadhams home**⁷⁵, next to the church, and renamed it *Elmwood*.



The dam broke in the spring of 1866, sending the contents of the mill pond over the falls and washing away the bridge at the foot of Church Street. At the time, a plank bridge connected the hamlet with the grist mill. Afterwards, that bridge was extended to the far shore, and this first crossing abandoned. Image courtesy of Evelyn Brant.

The **Congregational Church**⁷⁶ (1837) demonstrates the architecture of frugality practiced by people who knew the value of a well-constructed building. It took ten years for the First Congregational and Presbyterian Society of Westport to complete this meeting house. Forty years after they moved it here, they salvaged the rear wing of the old hotel for a Parish Hall. The old stage and sprung dance floor still survive.

On the west side of the Lewis/Wadhams road stand the commercial buildings that made up the nineteenth-century equivalent of a shopping mall. J.R. Delano built the **brick store**⁷⁷ on the corner (1829). In 1875, C.D. Sprague offered general merchandise there, followed by C.M. Sherman who also kept the Post Office from 1915-1936. It later became an Agway farmer's supply and, most recently, two successive bakeries. Next on the right was **D. F. Payne's (later Cilly's) store**⁷⁸ (1869) and then the **Union Store**⁷⁹, an early farmers' cooperative. Together, these storekeepers filled the needs of the hamlet's 1300 residents as well as all the surrounding farm families.

Credits:

Content by Virginia Westbrook. Design by MajaDesign, Inc. Edited by Malcom Willison.

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Cover photographs by Virginia Westbrook: (front) Ballard Park Performance Pavilion, (back) formal garden, Knolls Cottage (left) & Garden Cottage (background).



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Fruits & Vegetables: Pick up a copy of the **Guide to Local Food in Essex County**

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Sources for contemporary and historical information: **Heritage House, Westport Library, Wadhams Free Library**

North Country Architecture: Take a tour with **Adirondack Architectural Heritage, Keeseville**