

## Central Village

On Wednesday evening, February 14, 1906, a group of public spirited individuals gathered in the Town Hall to discuss the formation of the Central Village Improvement Society. The driving force behind the CVIS was the village grocer and postmaster Abram J. Potter and a young school teacher named Alice A. Macomber. The group got quite a bit done that first meeting. They publicly committed to working together to make Central Village a better place; they donated ten cents apiece to demonstrate the seriousness of their intentions; and they elected officers. Edward L. Macomber, President; Alice A. Macomber, Secretary; and Oscar H. Palmer, Treasurer. Charles R. Wood was appointed to a committee assigned the task of writing the Society's constitution and bylaws. For the next two decades, the CVIS was an active force in Westport, and many of its considerable accomplishments are still with us today. One of the first jobs the Society tackled was to dig a well beside the village tree. The well was hand dug in the fall of 1907, to a depth of 20 feet, at a cost of \$171. More improvements quickly followed; a pump was attached to the well; a water trough set in place; curbing was built and a wooden seat constructed around the tree; a lamppost was added and a flower bed. Sidewalks were laid out throughout the village. To pay for these projects, the Society sponsored ham and bean suppers, and chicken dinners, and clam bakes. They put on plays and other entertainments. School children donated their pennies to help the cause. Years later, long after the CVIS disbanded, neighbors came and sat on the bench around the tree and watched the world go by. You can still see the initials CVIS, and the date 1907, chiseled in the [water trough](#) at Central Village. The water pump was in use up until about 1980. The CVIS doesn't meet anymore (the group faded away in the 1920s) but the work they completed has stood the test of time.

The area around the intersection of Main and Adamsville Roads has always been accepted as the center of town. Even today, the stretch of Main Road between Kirby Road and Hix Bridge Road is sometimes jokingly referred to as "downtown Westport." Here are concentrated providers of many of the basic services of communal life: supermarkets, banks, police and fire stations, Town Hall, lawyers, churches, doctors and dentists, gas stations, gift shops, restaurants, pharmacy, social clubs, etc. In the old days, Central Village was also the hub of public transportation. At one time two horses drawn stage lines passed through Westport carrying passengers and mail. Both intersected at Central Village. One stage came from Little Compton, through Central Village, then on to South Westport, Russell's Mills, and finally New Bedford. The other started at the Point, traveled north on Main Road to Central Village, before continuing on to the Head, Smith Mills in Dartmouth, and then into New Bedford.

The first post office in Central Village was opened in May, 1862. In 1905, a young fellow named Abram Joy Potter was named Post Master. Abe Potter, as everyone knew him, had started out as a carpenter and teacher, but by 1905 he was in Central Village running the post office and grocery store. In the old days, before cars, Abe Potter operated a stable and grain room in the barn that today houses the Lobster Company. One of Abe's daughter's, Inez, remembered her father's barn always filled with horses used by the mail carriers, and how her father hitched up horses to a sleigh in winter when it snowed to deliver the Central Village children to school. Mr. Potter retired as Postmaster in 1944, and the building where his store and post office was located was knocked down in 1955. Abe Potter is remembered for many things. Some say he refused to sell cigarettes or cigars in his store because of his objection to tobacco. Others recall how he served as a Library Trustee for

many years and how he worked tirelessly to fill the Library with books. But mostly people remember how Abe Potter loved to dance, and how he was a regular at the Central Village Grange dances for many years. Abe's wife was named Jennie and together they raised three children, Inez, Miriam, and Lynwood. Lynwood grew up to be Chief of the Fire Department. Abe Potter lived to be 91 and died in 1965.

When Abe Potter retired as Post Master in 1944, the job was taken over by Chester M. Brackett. The [post office](#) was relocated to the south side of Adamsville Road where it is today, to a grocery store operated by Chet Brackett and his wife Blanche. Mr. Brackett was a retired Armour Meat Company salesman, and some recall he always sold Armour meat products in his store. Brackett's also sold gasoline and for many years there were two Gulf gas pumps out in front. During WWII, Chester Brackett served on the town Rationing Board with Charles Brightman and Russell Davis. Mr. Brackett retired in 1958 (after which Eugene Feio became Postmaster), and died in 1963. Blanche Brackett outlived her husband by 30 years and only passed away recently at the age of 98. Mrs. Brackett is remembered as a tall, thin woman who always wore her hair in a tight bun atop her head. Thelma Wood, of Central Village, tells a nice story about Blanche. It seems Mrs. Brackett had a Cocker Spaniel dog named Sally. During World War II when gasoline was rationed, the bus company in Fall River ran a line from the city, through Westport, to Horseneck Beach. In the summer, the bus stopped in Central Village to pick up and drop off passengers. Blanche's dog Sally would jump onto the bus at Central Village, ride with the driver down to the beach, be away a few hours, and be dropped off at Central Village on the bus return trip.

In the 1930s, on the same spot where the Bracketts later had their store, Elbert "Burt" Brownell ran a gas station and auto

repair shop. After "Burt" Brownell, the place was run by Carl Wood. The Wood family has been a part of Central Village since 1901 when Charles R. Wood and his wife Annie bought the land where the Woods still farm today. Charlie Wood was an energetic individual. In addition to fathering ten children, he was a farmer and a butcher; he served on the Board of Health and the School Committee; and he helped maintain the town's roads. He donated the property where the [Central Village Fire Station](#) is today, and after turning over the land, he pitched in and helped the other volunteer firemen construct the building. When Charlie wasn't tied up with any of the above, he was operating one of Westport's earliest school bus systems. Charlie Wood was finally laid to rest in 1954 at the age of 86.

Carl Wood, one of Charlie's six sons, ran the variety store and gas station in Central Village. Carl also operated another store at the corner of Main and Cornell Road where [Ellie's Restaurant](#) is today. Another of Charlie Wood's son left an everlasting mark on town. When Harold S. Wood graduated from college in 1934, the Great Depression was ravaging the country. Harold worked for his father for a while, around the farm, and driving a school bus. Then in 1935, Harold launched a 40 year long career of public service, as a teacher, a High School Principal, and a Selectman. Among his many other achievements, Harold was the coach of Westport's undefeated Narragansett Football League Champions of 1939. In 1952, he became the first principal of the new Westport High School on Main Road. In 1976, after he retired as Selectman, the School Committee voted to name the High School auditorium the Harold S. Wood Auditorium as a gesture of gratitude for Mr. Wood's many years of service.

[The Woods remain active in Westport today.](#) Bob Wood is very well known and highly regarded as a former member of the Board of Health and as the BOH agent for many years. And over in Central

Village, Jim Wood, and his young son John, are still working the earth, representing the fourth and fifth consecutive generations of Woods to farm continually on the same piece of land.

The old barn in Central Village, where Abe Potter had his stables, has seen many uses over the years. Constructed around 1850, the building served in the late 1800s as part of an undertaker's business where caskets were made. In the early 1900s, the barn was a social club for dances, basketball games, and corn husking bees. After many years as Abe Potter's livery stable, the structure was used during the Depression by the Overseers of the Poor as a distribution center where clothes were handed out to the needy. Frank Cassidy, a retired military man, ran an antique shop out of the building in the late '50s and early '60s. Around 1968, three area fisherman, Bud Smith, Russ Hart, and Ed Doane bought the old barn and established the Lobster Company, where locally caught lobster and fish were sold. In 1987, a fire burned a hole in the roof and damaged the second floor. To the relief of local preservationists, the building was saved and quickly restored. Today, the lower floor is still used as a fish market, the Lobster Company.

Just north of the fish market is the [Central Village Fire Station](#). Prior to the 1920s there was no organized fire department in town. If your house went up in flames you depended upon your friends and neighbors to rush to your rescue and form a bucket brigade. For really serious blazes a call went out to Dartmouth, which sent its vehicles and men across the town line - for a fee, of course. In 1927, after a rash of arson-suspected fires, five men got together to form the Westport Volunteer Fire Company: Irving Hammond, Stanley Gifford, Robert Gifford, Robert Gifford, Jr., and Frank Perry. This core group was quickly joined by numerous other

volunteers. In 1943, permanent paid firemen started being hired, backed up by volunteers. Irving Hammond served as Westport's first Fire Chief from 1927 to 1941. Stanley Gifford took over the reins from 1941 to 1961. More recent Chiefs have included Harold Miller, George Dean, and today's William Tripp.

One of the first acts of the volunteers in 1927 was to erect the Central Village Fire Station. The firemen themselves built and paid for the station, raising money by putting on suppers, shows, and bingos. To this day, the Central Village station is owned by the Volunteer Fire Company, which leases the building to the town. The fire station at the Head, on Reed Road, currently closed, was also built and owned by the volunteer firemen from that area. Only the Briggs Road fire station is town property. In 1978, an addition was made to the north end of the Central Village station. The new part was built by students from Diman Regional Vocational High School and was paid for largely by donations from Westporters from all over town.

The first piece of fire equipment used in Westport was a small, hand-drawn chemical device. In 1927, Irving Hammond and his buddies converted a 1924 Chevy into a makeshift fire wagon. In 1928, a Maxim Fire Engine, built in Middleboro and capable of hauling 80 gallons of water, was purchased. This vintage piece of Westport fire apparatus is still around at the Central Village station, and is sometimes put on display during Fourth of July parades. In 1931, Stanley Gifford designed a tank truck capable of carrying 1,000 gallons of water. Gifford convinced the Mack Truck Company to build his brainchild, and for a while in the early 1930s his vehicle was the first-of-its-kind in use anywhere in the United States. Today, the [old 1,000 gallon tank truck](#) is rusting away in a field on Pine Hill Road.

In about 70 years, the Westport Fire Department has never lost a man killed in action fighting a fire. This is not to say there have not been some very serious blazes in town. The most tragic fire in Westport's history occurred in November, 1952, in the north end on Mount Pleasant Street, when a kitchen fire broke out in a two story frame house owned by Mary and Alladin Audette. The fire started around midnight with the family asleep upstairs. Smoke quickly filled the residence. Mrs. Audette and eight of her ten children died of smoke inhalation. Mr. Audette and two of his kids were out of the house working at the time and survived. Over 1,500 mourners attended the sacred high mass of requiem at St. George's Church.

In the grassy median at Central Village stood the Village Tree and the Town Pump. The tree was a mighty elm planted in 1869 by Caleb Macomber. A wooden seat encircled the tree and for decades the spot provided a shady perch for Central Villagers. The years, of course, eventually took their toll. Ravaged by disease and termites, battered by storms, the Village Tree was taken down in 1961. In recent years new trees have been planted to replace the original elm.

The Town Pump was a project completed by the CVIS in 1907. Some residents actually relied upon the pump for water, when their own wells went on the blink or during periods of drought. Mostly the pump provided a quaint backdrop for picturesque Central Village. The pump started to run into problems in the 1970s. Station wagons would arrive from neighboring communities and people would get out and fill 25 to 30 jugs of water. People would pull up to wash their cars. Beach-goers would stop to rinse off bathing suits and sandy feet. For a while in 1977, the pump was diagnosed with a high fecal coliform count. Mostly the pump became a traffic problem. Cars would

stop at 1 a.m. to draw water and make a racket. Neighbors started to complain. Then on top of everything, automobiles crashed into the pump so many times the highway department erected cement posts to try to protect it. Eventually everybody had had enough. Around 1980 the pump was removed and the well capped. The pump lives on in numerous old photographs and picture postcards.

A short distance west of Central village lived one of Westport's more well known citizens of this century, Oscar H. Palmer. By the time Oscar died in 1976, he had lived his entire life of 92 years as a dairy farmer on Adamsville Road. Henry Palmer, Oscar's grandfather, purchased the farm in 1855 from Nathan Brownell. Oscar inherited the place from his father, Franklin, in 1932. Oscar did not limit himself only to tilling his fields and tending his cows. He served as Registrar of Voters for 37 years from 1906 to 1943. Figuring he hadn't done enough, he put in 25 more years as Assessor from 1943 to 1968. Add it up. That's 62 consecutive years of public service. The Selectmen in 1968 voted Oscar Palmer Westport's Outstanding Town Employee. Oscar is also remembered for his antique collection, mostly items he found in the various nooks and crannies of his own house, which, incidentally, was built in 1700. Wooden kitchen utensils, muzzle loaded muskets and pistols, shoe buckles, engraved powder horns. Oscar would take them out for his friends when they came around. And Indian artifacts, relics his plow uncovered while he worked his fields; arrowheads and tomahawks and pottery shards. Oscar is buried in Beech Grove Cemetery. Even in death he didn't travel far from home.

Farther west on Adamsville Road lives Charlie Costa. Charlie has been involved with farming in town, in one way or another, all his life. John and Emily Costa had a farm at the intersection of Hix Bridge and Main Road where the Normans live today. Charlie lived



there with his parents until 1946, at which time the Costas moved to their current location on the north side of Adamsville Road. Charlie Costa has a long history of community service. He was on the Board of Health for 16 years, and was a two term Selectman in the 1970s. In recent time Charlie has been focused on the noble task of preserving Westport's farm land through his involvement as an assistant commissioner with various state and federal Food and Agriculture Departments. Charlie works with tools such as the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program to save as many of Westport's farms as possible. There was a time not that long ago when Westport had the most operating dairy farms of any town in Massachusetts. The state funded APR program buys the developmental rights from farmers and then ensures the land will remain for agricultural purpose only. Currently in 1995, there are seven or eight farms protected by APR in Westport. Men like Charlie Costa are trying to make sure that number increases every year.

Not far from Charlie Costa's, on Sodom Road, are two other well known farms operated by the Medeiroses and the Martins. These two families are representative of the numerous other Portuguese families who came to town early in this century and played an important role in shaping the Westport we know today. Manuel Medeiros was born in 1885 on the island of St. Michaels, the Azores. He immigrated to the United States, to Fall River, around 1900. With his brothers, Joseph and John, he rented land in Westport and raised dairy cattle, and ran a milk delivery route in Fall River. In 1918, the Medeiros family bought a piece of land on Sodom Road, and by 1921, Manuel was milking 40 cows on his own High View Farm. Manny Medeiros is remembered as a fun-loving, mischievous man, a wheeler dealer who bought and sold land with unsurpassed cunning and skill. He died in 1964. Manny's son, George, and his wife Laura (my in-laws), took over the farm, and, along with George's sister, Mary,

still live on the High View homestead. George served as Westport's Assessor for approximately 30 years, and Mary is easily one of the most widely known women in town. Michael and Steve, the third generation, operate the dairy farm today. In the spring, in April, crowds of farmers from all over gather in the fields on top of the hill on Sodom Road to take part in the biggest farm machinery sale of its kind anywhere in Southeastern Massachusetts. With father George and son Steve auctioneering, and Mike with his pointer working the crowd, the bids fly back and forth furiously all day long, and by the time it's all over, hundred of pieces of equipment have changed hands.

Manuel and Antone Martin also started their [dairy farm](#) on Sodom Road in 1918. Soon Antone bowed out and Manuel was on his own. He quickly decided he could make a better profit turning his milk into cheese than he could selling it to a dairy. With the help and guidance of Antone Viera over on Old County Road, Mr. Martin started producing and selling Portuguese Style Fresh Cheese, a soft curd cheese, similar to cottage cheese, but richer. Transforming the milk into cheese is a quick process, taking only a few hours. The cheese made today is sold tomorrow. In a good year, the farm produces 10,000, one ounce packages of Martin's Fresh Cheese each week. Manuel died in 1964, and his son David "Cheesy" Martin, took over the [business](#). Today, trucks deliver Martin's cheese throughout the region, mostly to customers in and around Fall River, but also to stores as far away as Boston, Lowell, and Connecticut.

Returning to Central Village, the first prominent building we encounter on the east side of Main Road is the [old wooden Town Hall](#). Westport's first town meeting was held on August 20, 1789, in the residence of William Gifford in Central Village. The following year, in 1790, the people got together and built the first Town Hall. That

building stood 100 years, until 1890, when the wooden structure we see today was erected at a cost of \$3,008. Old photos show there was once a cannon facing south and a tall flag pole on the front lawn. Town meeting was held in a big room on the second floor, while the various departments were located on the lower level. Town meeting in the old days, like today, could get pretty exciting. When Alton Boan, the potato farmer, and his wife Isabel, were interviewed as part of the Bicentennial Celebration, they said of their neighbors at town meeting, "they'd shout at each other and call one another some real snappy names." The [red brick Town Hall](#) we use now was built in 1938. Soon after, the old wooden hall at Central Village was brought at auction by St. John's Catholic Church. Today St. John's uses the building as a religious education center.

South of the old Town Hall is the [Quaker Meeting and the Macomber Community House](#). The Friends Meeting in Central Village has an ancient history with roots reaching back to the Apponogansett Meeting in neighboring Dartmouth. In 1699, the Apponogansett Meeting expanded and a new group, called the Acoaxet Meeting was founded in what is now Westport. After a few years of gathering in individual homes for worship, a Meeting House was erected in 1716. This building was used for almost 100 years. The only remnants of that first meeting house are a set of granite steps on the front lawn, [The Mounting Rock](#), which was used in the old days by ladies getting in and out of their carriages. In 1808, Westport's most famous citizen, Paul Cuffee, applied for and was granted admission to the meeting. Cuffee was a ship builder and merchant who by 1815 was the wealthiest black man in the United States. Cuffee was also a social activist who built schools, fought for black civil and political rights, and led a back-to-Africa movement for freed slaves. Cuffee also helped pay for the second [Friends Meeting House](#) in Central Village, the one we know today, which was put up in 1814. This

building underwent a major renovation in 1872, which included removing the wooden partition that had separated the men and women in the early days. Just one more note about Paul Cuffee. He died in 1817, and the [memorial monument](#) out in front of the meeting was dedicated in 1913. Cuffee is buried with his wife in the back behind the building. Cuffee's grave appears to be off by itself, suggesting to some that even among Friends in the early 19th century, blacks were segregated away from the rest. This is not true. According to Eleanor Tripp, a member of the Central Village Friends Meeting, and one of our most eminent local historians, Cuffee is actually surrounded by hundreds of other Friends, all of whom, in keeping with simple Quaker tradition, sleep forever in unmarked graves.

In the modern era, one event all the bibliophiles in the area look forward to is the annual Quaker Meeting book sale. The sale started in 1962 as the brainchild of a Mennonite minister, John Ruth, who was serving as a part-time pastor at the Meeting at the time. Ruth suggested the sale as a fund raiser and the idea has been going strong ever since. In 1963, Dr. Stuart Kirkaldy took over the job of running the sale, assisted by a small army of volunteers. All year long donated books come pouring in, piling up in Dr. Kirkaldy's office, and finally filling to overflowing the storage shed behind the meeting. Members spend hours sorting the books and setting bargain prices. For many years, paperbacks sold for ten cents and hard cover books for a quarter. On the day of the sale, the Saturday after the Fourth of July, most of the books are displayed on tables under a tent on the lawn, while still others fill the pews in the Meeting House. Crowds ring the roped off sale area, expectantly waiting. At 11 a.m. sharp, Dr. Kirkaldy blows his whistle and the rush is on. People fill up cardboard boxloads of books, for "summer reading." Many of these same volumes are donated back to the booksale the following year. The entire affair is based upon the

honor system, the morning of the sale, and in the days that follow, when the unattended books remain under the tent, and customers pay by stuffing money into a coffee can. On Saturday, part of the event is always a white elephant and baked goods sale. Some people remember for many years retired SMU Professor Wesley Panunzio selling hot dogs and soda in the corner under a tree. One book sale story tells of the year nobody was interested in paying twenty five cents for a Moby Dick by Herman Melville. Day after day the book sat on the table, unsold. Then someone discovered it was a first edition, which later went to the University of Colorado for \$400. Proceeds from the book sale help support the Friends Meeting, and other peace and justice worthy causes.

One activity the friends have been involved with over the years is sponsoring refugee families who enter the United States. In 1956, the Meeting acted as a "guardian" for the Olzewski family from Dresden. Mr. And Mrs. Olzewski and their children, Lotha, Gertrude, and Guergen escaped from East Germany to West Germany and then made their way to the United States. The Friends sponsoring delegation included the much admired and respected surgeon Dr. Frank Lepreau. The Olzewskis stayed in the home of the Westport artist Edna Leuvelink.

Just north of the Friends Meeting is the [Macomber Community House](#). The Friends built the structure in 1934 as a community center where people could gather for lectures, suppers, classes, plays, musical events, and so on; exactly the sort of activities the building is still used for today. In the 1980s, the building was rededicated as the Macomber House to honor the Macomber family for their many contributions to the town of Westport. The family included Eddie L. Macomber, one of our longest serving town officials; Mabel Macomber, who taught Sunday school at the Meeting

for 47 years; Sophie, Hattie, and Marianna Macomber, all of whom were involved with community affairs; and of course, probably the most well known member of the family, Alice A. Macomber. Born in 1879, the daughter of John and Esther Macomber, Alice attended Westport Schools, and later went to Moses Brown in Providence. She began teaching in 1906, and before she retired in 1940, she had taught in school systems in Dartmouth, Fairhaven, and Westport. The final 17 years of her career, she was the principal of the Greenwood Park School in the north end of town. Alice is remembered as a kindly lady, always willing to help, who was very active in community affairs, ranging from the CVIS to the Friends Meeting. She passed away in 1956. When a big new elementary school opened in 1955, it was named the Alice A. Macomber School to honor her name. Just to wrap up this topic, today there are two well known buildings in the town named for the same family; the Macomber Community Center and the Alice A. Macomber Elementary School.

Across the road from the Friends Meeting is the [Westport Grange](#), Number 181, Patrons of Husbandry. The national Grange was founded in 1867 as an agricultural organization oriented toward fellowship and service. While the official goals of the Grange include building character, developing leadership, and promoting community betterment, mostly the Grange was a place for farmers to get together to talk about crops and prices, and to socialize. Whist parties, sewing contests, dances, fairs and bazaars, chicken barbecues, clambakes, minstrel shows; the Grange was where farmers and their families went to have a good time. The Central Village Grange was first organized in 1890 with Cortez Allen as the first Master. In the early days the Grangers leased a building called the Union Hall. In 1924, on the same site, a new building was put up, the one we see today. During the World War II when gasoline was rationed and people couldn't go very far, the Tuesday night Grange

dances were extremely popular. According to Mary Medeiros from Sodom Road, "Everybody was always there, from kids in their teens to old Abe Potter." Alton Boan played the piano at the dances. Charlie Costa says he never missed a Tuesday night dance at the Central Village Grange, and then on Thursday night he went to the Watuppa Grange dance in North Westport and did it all again.

One thing the Grange is known for is members who remain loyal and active in the organization over many years. In 1965, for example, George H. Howland had been a Central Village Granger for 60 years, while eight members held 50 year pins, including Abram Potter, Jamie Smith, Carlton Macomber, and Gertrude Wood. Past Masters have included Charlie Brightman, John Smith, Carlton Macomber Jr. and Sr., James Vaughan, and Isabel Boan.

Inside the Grange Hall are many interesting historic artifacts, including the original signed and framed charter hanging on the wall. And then there's the curtain on the stage at the west end of the hall. In the 1940s and 1950s, during dances, this curtain was lowered and local businesses bought space on the curtain for advertisement. The curtain is still there and a recent look revealed a heavy canvas with a painted scene of an Italian lake, the handiwork of the Hadfield Sign Company in 1951. The ads surrounding the blue lake include Potter's Funeral Home, Lees Oil Service, Carlton Macomber Auto Repair, Jack Davis Chevrolet, Frank Slocum Insurance and Auctioneer, and Al Lees at Central Village.

In front of the Grange Hall is a [granite water trough](#) that is often planted with flowers in the summertime. The trough used to be located near the intersection of Drift and Kirby Roads, where for many decades it collected water from a hand pump and a spring for the benefit of tired and thirsty horses. When Route 88 was built in

the early 1960s, a stretch of Kirby Road was eliminated. Milton Borden rescued the trough and had it transported to the Central Village Grange where it stands today. Water troughs for horses at one time were scattered all over town. The trough and pump next to the village tree in Central Village have already been discussed. There were also troughs on Handy Hill, in South Westport, and at the Head, just to name a few. With the advent of the automobile, Westport's horse troughs became obsolete.

The Central Village Grange is still an active group, although many of its members are getting on in years. Automobiles, television, video games, personal computers, all have taken a heavy toll on grange participation. The Grange Hall is still used for a variety of purposes, including community meetings, dance classes, and as the site of the Westport Food Coop.

A little south of the Grange Hall is St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. The origins of the church reach back to around 1910 when a Fall River priest, Father John DeValles, began gathering Westport Catholics together for religious services. Those first masses were held in private homes, the Grange Hall, and the old Town Hall. In 1913, the original St. John's Church was built using donated money and labor. The church got along with visiting pastors in the early years until the first regular priest, Father Callaman, was assigned to Central Village in 1930. Priests in recent years have included the Reverends Cornelius O'Neil, Edward Sharpe, and Edmund Fitzgerald. The original St. John's put in nearly 70 years of dutiful service to its parishioners, including to the author's wife Linda, who was baptized, had her First Communion and Confirmation, and was married - to me- at the church. Eventually worshippers began filling St. John's to overflowing especially from July to September when the summer people are in. The strain became too much and the



little church was knocked down in 1978. Immediately, a new much larger, St. John the Baptist Church was erected on the spot.

While St. John's was developing in Central Village, another smaller church was emerging out at the summer colony on East Beach. St. Rose of Lima attended to the spiritual needs of the Catholic visitors to Horseneck Beach. The church was served by visiting pastors and local altar boys, like Charlie Costa. The little chapel by the sea was destroyed by the hurricane of 1938. A remnant of the church created a mini-mystery in the 1970s. A [cast iron bell](#) was discovered in a shed behind the old St. John's. At first nobody was sure where the bell came from, until finally it was determined it was salvaged from the ruins of St. Rose of Lima. A vertical wooden stand was built for the bell (which is still in use today), and for a while, in the late 1970s the bell was rung 20 times before and after mass.

Another church in the area stood on the south-east corner of the intersection of Hix Bridge and Main Road. The little white chapel, called the Third Christian Church or the Knotty Shingle Church, was built in 1842. Although the church was well attended in the 1800s, by the start of this century the place of worship had begun to fall out of usage. The last regular pastor at the Third Christian ended his tenure in 1922, and in 1927 the parish merged with the Central Village Friends Meeting. The building stood vacant for over 20 years, and finally burned to the ground on the evening of March 29, 1947.

South of St. John's Church was the home of Frederick Robinson and his wife Ann. Sometime in the late 1940s the couple opened a small restaurant next to their home and called it Fred and Ann's. Fred is remembered as a pipe smoking gentleman who was devoted to

his business. Originally the place had a soda fountain where customers came in and sat on stools for their coffee and donuts. Later, the soda fountain was removed and replaced with booths. Numerous local women found employment as waitresses at Fred and Ann's, including Cathy Grundy and Mary McCarthy. Fred and Ann's has always been known for its regular, loyal customers, many of whom are getting on in years. Some people come in on the same night of the week, for the same meal, year after year. At Fred and Ann's, in the old days, it was eels and johnny cakes on Tuesday night, pan-fried tripe on Thursday, and ham and beans on Saturday. Ann died of cancer around 1970, and Fred, people believe, eventually retired and moved to Florida. Fred and Ann's is still doing business, and the parking lot in front of the red, wooden building on Main Road is almost always full.

The origins of [Partners Village Store](#) on Main Road go back to the early 1970s when Nancy and Bill Crosby operated a wine and beer making supply company in Westport, Connecticut called Crosby and Baker. In 1979, the Crosbys relocated their operation to Westport, Massachusetts, onto land they bought from Andrew Perry. In the 1980s and 1990s, the business prospered, expanding many times, and adding a full line of gourmet food, toys, books, and gifts. In 1992, Nancy Crosby and Jan Hall formed a new association, and Partners Village Store was born.

Perry's Bakery started out in the 1920s as a board balanced across a couple of stones where an elderly lady named Mary Perry sold a few vegetables. The Perry family had ten acres of land along Main Road where they raised their own produce. After Mrs. Perry got too old to carry on, her son Frank took over. Frank was a charter member of the Westport Fire Department and is remembered by many as the operator of one of the town's earliest bus line companies.

Andrew Perry and his wife, Gwen ran the fruit and vegetable stand in the '50s and '60s. In time Gwen started baking a few date nut and banana breads to sell and the items did so well that a full bakery was added to the stand around 1970. Perry's Bakery became known for its cinnamon buns, chocolate cakes, homemade breads, sourcream cakes and baked beans. For a while, Andrew and Gwen's daughter Lois ran a hot dog stand near the bakery in the summer when Lois was home from college. In 1982, the bakery was sold to Karen Smith, who kept the Perry's Bakery name, and who still does a booming business selling baked goods and coffee to townies and summer people. Perry's has a special place in the heart of this author; my wife Linda and her sister Ann worked in the vegetable stand as teenagers in the 1960s, and my daughter Lauren works the counter at Perry's today. For a brief period in the early 1970s, Bud Grantham ran a small drug store beside the bakery; the pharmacy later relocated to where Lees Supermarket's liquor store is now.

South of Perry's, when you see long, flatbed trailers loaded high with bales of hay you know you're in the domain of "Hay Ray" Raposa. The Raposa family has had a farm on Main Road for about 75 years where they raised dairy cows, vegetables, and wood for sale to pulp factories in Providence. Around 20 years ago, Ray went into the business of hauling hay, which earned him his nick name, "Hay Ray." At first Ray grew and cut hay on his own land, but now he travels to gigantic farms in upstate New York and Canada to pick up a load. A typical haul involves 800, fifty pound bales, for a total of around 40,000 pounds. Every trip is a little different; sometimes he picks up Timothy hay for horses or alfalfa hay for cows. Ray says he never has any difficulty selling his load; his customers include feed stores, stables, dairy farms, and construction sites which use low quality bales as silt barriers. Ray wasn't the first hay hauler in our area; the Tripp brothers from Ivy Meadow Farms on Sodom Road

were pulling flatbeds loaded with hay long before Ray Raposa got into the business.

For the purposes of this essay, the southern edge of Central Village will be called the [Wing Carriage House](#). This building has an interesting history. The Wing Estate on Mount Pleasant Street in New Bedford, of which the Carriage House originally was a part, was constructed around 1860. In this century the estate came into the possession of the Holy Name Church, which demolished the main building and had plans to tear down the Carriage House to make room for a parking lot. In stepped two local preservationists, Ann Baker and Norma Wilbur. They negotiated with the church and Norma finally bought the building. Aided by an assorted crew of carpenters and contractors and other volunteers, the Carriage House was taken apart piece by piece, transported from New Bedford, and reassembled on Main Road in Westport. Norma eventually converted the structure into a working place for craftsman and artisans. For a while in the late 1970s, painters, woodworkers, potters, and photographers set up shop. One occupant of the Carriage House at the time was the Cuffee Bookstore, which was operated by a young former textile engineer named Tom Perkins. Tom went on to become a Selectman in the 1990s, at which time he engaged in a battle royal with Town Counsel Carl Lees. Today the Wing Carriage House houses a variety of enterprises, including the main office of the town's most influential environmental activist group, the Westport River Watershed Alliance.

Returning to the intersection of Main and Adamsville Roads, and heading north, we encounter the [Westport Social and Athletic Club](#). This local watering hole, a favorite among many townies, got its start in the 1920s with a gentleman named Luther Bowman. Luther was born in 1904 and grew up in Central Village. In 1916, when he was 12 years old, Luther was walking along Main Road when a lady named Mrs.

Barrett called him over and asked if he could help her fix her flag holder. Luther, being an agreeable boy, said he could certainly try. And he fixed the flag holder just right. From that moment forward Luther's life was changed. The Barretts were a wealthy New Bedford couple who kept a grand house in Westport. Luther started working for them, doing odd jobs, and eventually became their chauffeur. The relationship continued for over 35 years, and the Barretts, who were childless, came to treat Luther like a son. When the Barretts died in the 1950s, Luther moved in to the big house on Main Road with his wife Elizabeth, where they still live today. Getting back to the Social Club- in the late 1920s, Luther purchased a former dance hall from Jack Oliver, the fellow who used to run the [telephone exchange](#) in South Westport. The dance hall stood beside the river on Drift Road south of Hix Bridge. Luther had the building cut into three pieces and transported to its current location at Central Village. Luther tells a story of how he rode on the roof of each section of the building as it was hauled up Handy Hill. Luther converted the old dance hall into a three lane duck-pin bowling alley. Customers paid 25 cents to bowl two strings, and another ten cents for a cup of peanuts. Local pin boys, who set the pins between frames, were paid two cents a string. Luther's brother, John, managed the place. Eventually, Luther rented the building to George Kent, who obtained a liquor license and started a bar. In time the bowling lanes were moved out, George Kent went over to Route 177, and Bill Pearson and his Social/Athletic Club moved in.

Bill Pearson was born in Fall River in 1915. He came to Westport after being seriously wounded in World War II. In 1948, Bill established his private, members-only club in Luther Bowman's former bowling alley. Over the years the Social Club has been the location of a lot of activities; from fiddling and square dancing, to game suppers. Mostly it's a comfortable place for the men in

town, and a few ladies, to get together with friends for a drink, and to play cards. Bill's is particularly busy on Monday night after the Town Hall meetings end and many of the local politicians drop in to unwind. It's not always easy to keep track of all of Bill's nicknames. Many people know him as "the Mayor of Westport." In his younger years, he was known as "Lover Bill." And for a while in the early 1960s, he was called "Painless Pearson - Tooth Yanker." This last refers to Bill's practice in the old days of extracting teeth from his customers between setting up rounds of liquor and beer. He kept a pliers in an old cigar box under the bar, and a sign over his head explained, "We use Seagram's pain killer, exclusively." This unusual combination of bartending and dentistry gained for Bill a certain renown - the National Enquirer did a story on him - and eventually attracted the attention of the Massachusetts Dental Association, which frowned on Pearson's pliers and ordered him to hang them up, which he did. Bill is known to one and all for having a big heart. Anonymously, he helps a lot of people down on their luck. Every Thanksgiving and Christmas he puts on a big feed. Turkey and dressing and all the trimmings. No charge. People who find themselves without a family or a place to spend the day, go to the Social Club and have dinner with Bill.

Not far from the Social Club, on the same side of Main Road, is the brown shingled [Milton E. Earle School](#), which today houses many of the town's administrative offices. The building was constructed in 1917 as a high school; was significantly enlarged in 1935; and was converted into a school for grades one to six in the early 1950s. After the new Elementary School on Old County Road was opened in 1977, classes in the Earle School came to an end, after which the building was occupied by the School Department. In 1952, the building was officially designated the Milton E. Earle School to honor one of Westport's most outstanding educators. Milton Earle was

born in New Bedford in 1893 and came to Westport with his family in 1906. A graduate of Brown University, he landed his first job as a teacher in the Westport school system in 1920. An extremely intelligent and energetic man, Milton was named Principal of the Westport High School in 1925, and was appointed Superintendent of Schools in 1928 at age 35. Earle is considered the Father of Westport Sports, having founded the High School sports program in the 1920s. By the time he finally retired in the late 1950s, Milton Earle had served Westport's schools for approximately 40 years, as a teacher, coach, principal, and superintendent. When he wasn't busy at school, he was down at Horseneck running Baker and Earle Beach with his partner John Baker. One of Milton's four sons, Richard, is Westport's Harbormaster today. Milton Earle died in September, 1966.

Just north of the Earle School, where [Country Woolens](#) is today, lived Charlie Brightman. In 1938, Charlie worked as a carpenter's helper putting up the new Town Hall. When the building was complete, Charlie stayed on as the Town Hall custodian, a job in which he served for many years. Aside from his sunny, cheerful disposition, Charlie Brightman is remembered for his tenure as the Chairman of the town Rationing Board during World War II, for his skill as a chair caner who saved many an old chair from the junk pile, and for his three decades as the organist at the Central Village Friends Meeting.

Our current red brick, colonial-style [Town Hall](#) was constructed in 1938 as a PWA (Public Works Administration) project. The structure cost \$73,000 to erect, with Westport kicking in \$40,000, and the federal government contributing the remaining \$33,000. All told, Westporters were provided with 12,801 hours of employment by the project at a time during the Depression when the work was sorely needed. The 20 room building was the creation of architect Israel T.

Almy of Somerset, and until this day, some people see a remarkable resemblance between the Westport Town Hall and the Somerset High School. The three Selectmen representing the town at the ceremony officially opening the building in November, 1939, were John Smith, Clifton Dwelley, and George Russell. Just as an aside, George Russell was the Selectman who in 1930 announced a competition for a Town Seal. The winning entry, the seal we still use today, was designed by Edward Coyne, and depicts agriculture, fishing, and the Waite-Potter House. In the competition, a jokester submitted a design that included burning ice houses, short lobsters, rum running, and financial difficulties.

One activity people remember occurring at the Town Hall were meetings of the Westport Rationing Board. Early in the Second World War, the U.S. government created the Office of Price Administration (OPA) to try to control the availability and distribution of goods and resources. The fighting men at the front were given top priority and everybody else had to tighten their belts. The OPA established 5,600 rationing boards across the country to make local decisions about whom should get how much of what. In Westport, the Rationing Board was made up of Chester Brackett, Charlie Brightman, and Russell Davis. The board met at the Town Hall, but had satellite sites scattered throughout town, mostly at schools, where student volunteers frequently helped out. Decisions by the board were based upon the principles of equal sharing and special need, family size, and occupation. Especially at the beginning of the war, everything was scarce. People accepted the shortages with relative equanimity. They believed in the war effort, and the long Depression had gotten everybody used to doing without. The most commonly remembered form of rationing involved booklets filled with little stamps that had to be presented to purchase an item. Sugar, coffee, butter, meat, nylons, shoes - if you wanted to buy it you had to produce a coupon.



Of course if you had enough money and had a few contacts you could get just about anything. The black marketeers did a booming business. Driving presented a particular set of challenges. New tires were virtually impossible to get and everybody made do with recaps. Gasoline was tightly controlled. People had to go before the Rationing Board to apply for a gasoline sticker to affix to their car. There were A, B, and C stickers. Anyone with a car got an A sticker, the basic ration of about three to four gallons a week. The highly coveted B and C stickers were given to those whose businesses depended upon a greater amount of gasoline; farmers, fisherman, doctors, etc. People kept an eye on each other to make sure higher sticker holders really deserved them. Nobody wanted to get caught with a C-stickered vehicle at a dance at Lincoln Park, for fear of losing the sticker. Mostly people were pretty tolerant of each other, assuming a live-and-let-live attitude toward rationing. A few more zealous individuals reported their neighbors to the Board for suspected waste and cheating. Toward the end of the war the United States economy was booming. The shortages feared by the government had not materialized, and many of the rationing restrictions were significantly relaxed.

South of the Town Hall is the new police station; new in the sense that it opened in 1976. Prior to its completion, the police headquarters were on the ground floor of the Town Hall. In the old days Westport had no organized police department. We relied upon part-time keepers of the peace called constables, one of whom was Everett Coggeshall. For most of this century we have had a formal department manned by paid officers. One early Chief of Police was Norman B. Hopkinson, "Hoppy" Hopkinson's grandfather. In Norman's era, in the late '20s and early '30s, the police station was in his house and offenders were locked up in his cellar. Other Westport

Police Chiefs have included Charles Dean, George Dean, Fred Palmer, and of course, today's Charlie Pierce.

North of the Town Hall is the most well known business in Westport today, [Lees Supermarket](#). The roots of Lees go back to 1951 when Al Lees, Sr. purchased a former International Harvester Farm Supplies store at public auction. At the time Lees Sr. was operating a fish market at the Point and a small hardware store on Main Road across from where the Santos barn is today. The Harvester store, which sold tractors, plows, and other farm equipment, and which was owned by Lynwood Potter and Babe Pettey, went out of business and the building and land were put on the block. Lees Sr. went to the auction expecting to pick up a few gears and nuts and bolts and other miscellaneous small items for his hardware store. When the auctioneer was having a tough time getting a bid for the building out of the crowd, Lees Sr. put up his hand, the auctioneer pointed at him and shouted "Sold!" and the rest is history. Lees Sr. moved his hardware store to his new location in Central Village and put his 22 year old son Al, Jr. in charge of the place. In the late 1950s, Lees Sr. began the transition from hardware to groceries. In 1961, Al Lees Jr. took over ownership of the store completely, and by 1970, the hardware was gone, and Lees Supermarket was solidly in place. Since then Lees has grown and expanded so many times we've all lost count. Al, Jr. and his son Albert, run the store today. The two men are highly regarded in town, with unparalleled reputations for hiring local people (the sons and daughters of Westport), and for their unstinting support of numerous community projects.

My wife Linda tells a story about Lees Supermarket that illustrates the kind of philosophy that keeps loyal customers coming back. The day before Thanksgiving Linda was at Lees doing her last minute shopping. The store was mobbed with shoppers loading up for

the big holiday meal. After Lin picked up everything she needed, she fell into line at the crowded check-out counters to wait her turn. Suddenly the crowd started buzzing. The store's computers had overloaded and crashed. All the cash registers were silent - shut down. What to do with all those frenzied shoppers lined up waiting to check out? Suddenly the line started moving forward again. When it was her turn the check out clerks quickly bagged all my wife's groceries. "What do I owe you?" Linda asked. "You don't have to pay now. Take your stuff home and the next time you're in pay us what you think you owe." My wife was amazed. The Lees had decided to allow all the shoppers to leave with their groceries and to pay on the honor system. Lin came home and sat at the kitchen table with a calculator and added up what she owed. The day after Thanksgiving she returned to Lees and paid her bill. The trusting attitude of the store towards its customers brightened the entire holiday season. Only in Westport. Only at Lees.

Across Main Road from Lees is the home of Dr. J. K. Stuart Kirkaldy and wife Francis (known as Frankie). Dr. Kirkaldy first hung out his shingle in Westport in 1959 and has been the town's primary medical care provider for the past 35 years. Prior to Dr. Kirkaldy, most people remember kindly old Dr. King from Adamsville. Throughout most of the 1950s, Westport was without a resident physician, and things got so bad the town mounted a campaign to attract a new doc. A native of Scotland, Dr. Kirkaldy received his medical degree from the University of Edinburgh, and practiced in England and Nova Scotia before coming to Westport. Dr. K, as he is called by many, is an avid birdwatcher, and is known for his close association with the Central Village Friends Meeting, particularly his work with the annual July Book Sale. When Dr. Kirkaldy first came to town he saw patients in his house. Then he built a building in his yard and used that as an office. This structure is later

where George Akerson published the Westport News in the later 1970s, and where today Attorneys Dorothy Tongue and Richard DesJardin have their law offices. In January, 1977, the Westport Family Medicine Center, so familiar to townspeople today, opened. Dr. K's early colleagues included Dr. Frank Lepreau and Nurse Practitioner Charlotte "Boots" Fleschig. Dr. Lepreau, aside from his solid reputation as a surgeon, is widely admired for his humanitarian work in poverty stricken Haiti and Appalachia. Everybody in town knows Boots. She started as a nurse with Dr. Kirkaldy in 1964, and later was trained as a Family Nurse Practitioner at Mass. General and Harvard School of Medicine.

The house where Dr. Kirkaldy lives now used to be the residence of one of Westport's most well known public figures, Edward "Eddie L." Macomber. Eddie L. is remembered mostly for his lengthy service as Town Clerk - 53 consecutive years from 1898 to 1951 - but his list of accomplishments extends far beyond that. Eddie was born in Central Village in 1877. His illustrious younger sister, Alice, was born in 1879. Eddie's father, John A. Macomber, first was elected Town Clerk in 1874, an office he held until 1898 when Eddie took over. Together, father and son, had a lock on the position for approximately 75 years. Eddie claimed never to have missed a single night of Town Meeting during his long tenure. This was an active man. The next time your life seems frenetically full, pause for a moment and consider the following list of Eddie L. Macomber's various activities: Town Clerk (53 years), Board of Health (35 years), Chairman School Committee, Board of Registrars, Library Trustee, Finance Committee, Chairman Town Republican Committee, President Central Village Improvement Society, active Friends Meeting, board member Old Dartmouth Historical Society, Board of Directors Moses Brown and Lincoln Schools, member Fall River Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children - and you think you're

busy. At 74 years of age Eddie L. was still going like a house afire when he was struck by a car and killed racing across a street in New Bedford in March, 1951. When Eddie died it was springtime and the town elections were coming up. The ballots had already been printed for the Town Clerk race between Eddie L. Macomber and Elmer B. Manchester. Elmer B. won, of course, but even from his grave Eddie L. went down fighting. 774 Westporters cast their votes for the deceased Eddie L. as a gesture of respect and appreciation. Elmer B. got 1012. The conventional wisdom at the time went something like this - it's a good thing Eddie L. didn't have a pet because if he did his dog could have won that election.

In this area are a number of well known business, including Silas Brown, the Westport Apothecary, and the Central Village Commons. Norma Judson started the Moby Dick Gift Shop in 1953 on Horseneck at the south end of the old Westport Point Bridge. In the late 1960s Norma relocated to Central Village. She called her new venture Silas Brown, a name she borrowed from her father-in-law. Silas Brown adds a touch of class to downtown Westport. The Westport Apothecary was founded by James Harb in 1970. Originally the Apothecary was where Cumberland Farms is today. For a few years, in the early 1970s, there were two drug stores in the area directly across the road from each other; Jim Harb's Apothecary on the west and Bud Grantham's The Medicine Chest on the east. The "duelling pharmacies," as my sister-in-law describes it. The Medicine Chest disappeared from the scene, and the Apothecary moved to its current location in 1972. Sadly, Jim Harb died in 1984 and since then his wife Joan has run the place, assisted by pharmacist Roger LeClerc. The Central Village Commons shopping center was developed in the early 1970s. For years, Jack Dolan owned the complex, including the Westport Paint and Hardware Store, where Jack could always be found behind the counter. Over the years, the businesses have come and

gone. People remember Schwartz's Package Store, Crespins, Kate Corey's Gallery, Sissy's, a number of banks, Video Replay, Independent Dry Cleaners, and Village Pizza.

Turning our attention north to where Main and Kirby Roads intersect, there used to be an automobile showroom on the west side of the street. In 1913, John H. Davis started selling Ford automobiles, trucks, and tractors. In 1928, John shifted to another company and Davis Chevrolet was born. After Mr. Davis died in 1953, his son Jack took over and ran the Chevy dealership until 1958. The house where the Davis family used to live is today occupied by a well known public figure, Carlton Lees. Carl Lees first entered town government in the 1950s as a Selectman. He later served many years as Town Counsel. In the early 1990s, Attorney Lees was at the center of a political firestorm when he was fired as Town Counsel by one Board of Selectman, and then reappointed by the next. Lees voluntarily stepped down as Town Counsel in 1995. Just south of Carl Lees' house is Gerry's Gift Shop. The marvel of this little business is that a mind-boggling selection of stock is jammed, apparently haphazardly, into a very small space. Yet the proprietress of the store, 93 year old Carrie Potter, can instantly and unfailingly locate any item you might want to see. The Gerry in Gerry's Gift Shop refers to Carrie's daughter Gerry who helped her mother start the shop in 1950s.

Across from Davis Chevrolet stood the House of Curtis Restaurant. In the early 1930s, Mailon Curtis and his wife Helen built the structure, where they lived, and later established the restaurant. The House of Curtis is best remembered for its quahog chowder, which in addition to being a specialty at the restaurant, was frozen and distributed in stores throughout the area. The House of Curtis was only in operation a few years. In 1959, the building

was sold to the Knights of Columbus, who still use the place as a hall today.

Frank Petty started the Village Garage. Mr. Petty worked for Davis Chevrolet for a long time before he broke away and set up his own automobile operation across the street. Frank is remembered for, among other things, raising sheep. In the years since Frank Petty, a number of individuals have run Village Garage. In the 1970s, two young fellows took the reins; Bruce Galloway and Mark Pierce. These two men were killed in a tragic accident at Horseneck in 1978. The accident occurred on Cherry and Webb Lane near Tripp's Boatyard when Mark and Bruce were moving a catamaran they owned from the water to the shore. Somehow the aluminum mast of the boat came in contact with overhead high tension wires and the two friends were electrocuted. My wife and I knew Mark and Bruce socially. They were widely known and liked and when they were suddenly taken away the whole town went into mourning. At the memorial service at Horseneck Beach for Bruce, hundreds of his friends formed a semi-circle in the sand to listen quietly to the service and the music and to somehow try to say good-bye.

Before we move on to our next topic, we would be seriously remiss if we failed to pay homage to Westport's most significant historic structure, the Waite-Potter House. The building stood for almost 300 years on the east side of Main Road in the vicinity of Snell Creek. Battered by storms, broken and crumbling, unable to attract an eleventh-hour salvation, the Waite-Potter House was taken down in the mid-1950s. All that remains on the site today is the vine-covered great fieldstone chimney. Scholars disagree regarding the exact date of the building's construction; either 1667 or 1677. There is no dispute that in 1940, the Waite-Potter House was the oldest standing structure in southeastern Massachusetts. The

name refers to Thomas Waite, the first owner of the house, and the Potter family, the last. After being seriously damaged in the hurricane of 1944, the first steps were taken to try to preserve what remained of the building. In the early 1950s, a rescue team consisting of, among others, Dick Paull, Eleanor Tripp, Helen Ellis, and Rosamond Pierce, made a last ditch effort to try to save the house. Their efforts failed. All was not lost. It so happened at the time in nearby Little Compton, the historic Wilbur House was being restored as a museum and headquarters for the Little Compton Historical Society. The Rhode Island restorers rummaged among the Waite-Potter House ruins and salvaged ax-hewn timbers, wide pine floor boards, and hand wrought hardware, and incorporated these elements into the renovated Wilbur House. So even though the Waite-Potter House is gone, a little bit of it remains forever over in Little Compton.

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