

Westhampton Beach Historical Society

Serving the
Communities of
Westhampton Beach,
Westhampton Dunes,
Westhampton, Quogue,
Remsenburg, Speonk
and Eastport



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Newsletter

Late Fall 2020

Our 2020 Accomplishments *The WHB Historical Society Adapts to Historic Conditions*

At our Annual Meeting on January 12, 2020, Society Co-Presidents Bo Bishop and Jon Stanat outlined ambitious plans for 2020, including a new exhibit, a Muster of historic fire-fighting equipment on the Great Lawn, historic crafts demonstrations, and our usual opening party, Pot Luck Supper, cemetery tours, and other activities. **2020 got off to a great start with three well-attended historic lectures** at the Westhampton Free Library, including *The Enduring Legacy of the North Fork Farmer* (Steve Wick), *The WPA: Art, Artists and Others of Long Island* (James Szakmary), and *Guardians of Hope: Our Historic Lighthouses* (Edward W. Webb). However, shortly after the last lecture, the Society, along with the rest of the country, began what has become a seemingly never-ending shutdown of normal operations. Despite

these conditions, we were able to continue our mission by adapting our procedures and re-imagining activities to provide the community with history-related services in 2020.

Our Board of Officers and Trustees met via Zoom to carry on Society management and a COVID-19 focus group was formed to determine activities that could continue, modifications that were required, and appropriate procedures for the Society. **A Safety Plan** was developed and implemented in accordance with NY Forward guidelines, personal protective equipment (PPE) was obtained, and modifications were made to our campus so that we could carry on safely.

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Arthur Kirmiss demonstrates the art of wampum-making outside the Foster-Meeker Heritage Center.



Barbara Beckerman dipped candles over an open fire for an appreciative audience.

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Our 2020 Accomplishments

The WHB Historical Society Adapts to Historic Conditions

Preparation continued for our **2020 exhibit on the history of firefighting** in the Greater Westhampton area with a special focus on efforts to combat the 1995 Sunrise Wildfire, and we were able to open the Museum exhibit from late July through early September with appropriate COVID-19 procedures in place. Although attendance was not as strong as usual, we did have nearly 100 Museum visitors during this time. We also continued our popular **historic crafts demonstrations**, including quilling, spinning, blacksmithing, bee-keeping, candle-making, wampum-making, and weaving. Over 115 attendees participated in these activities, which were held outdoors with appropriate protections in place, but without the usual hands-on experience. We also presented an **Historic Preservation Award** jointly to the Kobel Family and the Town of Southampton for the preservation of the **Topping-Raynor House at 121 South Road in Westhampton** via landmarking with the Town and granting of a façade easement through the Community Preservation Fund.

Behind the scenes we worked to **update our website www.whbhistorical.org** and provide more online information to our membership and folks interested in our history. We also completed several grant applications for funds to help offset the loss of revenue from our usual fund-raising activities and were successful in obtaining a **grant for operating costs from the Robert D. L. Gardiner Foundation**. We were also able to **replace the Tuthill House roof**, which was in dire condition.

Once the current health crisis is past, our usual Society activities will return. If there is a silver lining to this experience, it is that we have been able to continue the core activities of our mission throughout and have strengthened our website and other outreach methods to better serve the folks who depend on us. We wish all of you the very best throughout this experience and look forward to continuing our historic preservation and education efforts in 2021!



A 1907 photo of the Hook and Ladder No. 2 team and a list of Westhampton vs. Quogue competition events and scores.



A few of the many interesting items on display at our firefighting exhibit.

Check it Out – Our Website is Continually Updated!

As part of our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Westhampton Beach Historical Society has undertaken more frequent updates to our website www.whbhistorical.org to better reach our members and others interested in local history. The site now includes **news of our activities**, both on campus and in our community, information about **how to visit the Museum during the winter**, a short **video about the current exhibit**, links to other historic sites, including **walking and biking tours in our area**, copies of our **newsletters** from the past several years, and information about historic sites in our community. We also have **online sales of local history books** – it's very easy to use via PayPal – a great idea for your holiday shopping! Please take a few minutes to peruse our website and come back often – it's a safe way to stay in touch with our local history!

Our Museum Has a Much-Needed New Roof!

The Westhampton Beach Historical Society's museum building, the Tuthill House, has long needed a new roof. The gutters, some of which were falling off, also needed attention, as did the chimney flashing. Thanks to a recently-received bequest, and a very nice donation of period-appropriate shingles and nails, we were able to have the roof, gutters, and flashing replaced just in time for the upcoming winter!

Larry Jones, our more-than-capable restoration manager, coordinated the work, which was performed by **A. G. Home Improvement Services, Inc.** of Southampton. The shingles and stainless-steel ring shank roofing nails were originally purchased for use on a Bridgehampton historic construction project, but ended up being surplus and were donated by **Dr. Loren Skeist and his wife, Dr. Marlene Marko**, for use in replacing our roof. The project included replacing the shingles on all of the roof areas on the main volume of the house, removal and replacement of all gutters, re-flashing around two chimneys, repair of fascia boards, and painting of

multiple areas where work was performed. The completed job really looks great, as can be seen in the photo below, and we no longer have some of the moisture issues that previously plagued the upper floor.

We are very appreciative of the donation of shingles and the bequest funding that made the roof replacement possible. Our deepest thanks to the folks who made our new roof a reality!



Check out the beautiful new roof and gutters on the Tuthill House!

Leave Your Mark in Our Community: Consider a Bequest to the Westhampton Beach Historical Society

The Westhampton Beach Historical Society has recently benefitted from two bequests from members of our community. Bequests are extremely helpful to **support some of our more financially significant tasks** (such as this year's replacement of the Tuthill House roof) and **provide reserve funds** that are earmarked for "rainy-day" needs. Bequests allow the Society to plan ahead for programs and related expenses that do not fit into our routine budgets. **Bequests can also be designated for specific projects**, such as the Foster-Meeker Heritage Center restoration.

You too can leave a legacy by remembering the Westhampton Beach Historical Society with a planned gift from your estate. Your bequest will ensure that your legacy will live on in a tangible way and that you will be remembered for supporting the Society's activities, which encompass the Greater Westhampton area, including Eastport, Speonk, Remsenburg, Westhampton, Westhampton Beach, Westhampton Dunes, and Quiogue. Our mission includes collection and preservation of historical materials from the Greater

Westhampton area, interpreting and preserving the history of the area through exhibitions, educational programs and publications, facilitating historic research, and advocating the preservation of historic structures and sites.

The Society will be conducting outreach concerning bequests to the community in the coming months – please watch your mail and our website www.whbhistorical.org for more information. Please consider leaving a legacy gift to the Society, for it will be a deeply appreciated lasting memorial.





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Annual Appeal Reminder

If you are a member of this Society, you recently received our Annual Appeal letter in your mailbox. This year it is more important than ever that we receive your donation to help keep our Society and historic campus running. Although some of our usual costs have been lower, we still had to maintain our buildings, pay our very small staff, and keep the lights on. We were fortunate to receive several grants this year, but despite this, our 2020 income was significantly reduced and this situation may well continue into 2021. Please send your 2020 donation today and consider giving as generously as you are able. Our Society relies on your donations to support our activities – please help us to be there for you once this crisis is over!



*A beautiful summer
day at our campus.*