



# Westerly's Witness

www.westerlyhistoricalsociety.org

April 2022

## Westerly Historical Society Executive Board 2021-2022

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## Calendar of Events

**Sunday, April 24 , 2022**

**2:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

### *“Celebrating the Evolution of River Bend Cemetery”*

The Open House at River Bend Cemetery will celebrate the major renovation of its office and invites the public to tour the office, view exhibits, and take short tours of selected stones in the cemetery.

Opening remarks will be at 2:15 PM. Tours will leave the office on the quarter hour beginning at 2:30 PM.

Last tour at 3:30 PM.

Refreshments by the

Babcock-Smith House Museum Docents  
River Bend Cemetery, 117 Beach Street, Westerly, RI

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**Wednesday, May 11 , 2022**

**6:30 PM – 7:30 PM**

### *“The Westerly Jewelry Fire”*

**Presented by Joseph Fusaro**

This presentation will include a discussion of the 1975 fire which destroyed 64 High Street and the Westerly

Jewelry Company's former location. Numerous photographs and a detailed description of the valiant efforts of firefighters will be presented. Joseph Fusaro

is an assistant fire chief of the Westerly Fire Department and the unofficial historian of the many fires that have occurred throughout Westerly.

~ ~ ~

*Wednesday Programs Are Held  
at the Carriage House  
of the Babcock-Smith House Museum  
124 Granite Street, Westerly, RI  
Free Admission  
Complimentary Refreshments*



# WESTERLY'S WITNESS

Published by the Westerly Historical Society  
P. O. Box 91, Westerly, RI 02891, seven times per  
year in January, March, April, May, September,  
October and November

The mission of the Westerly Historical Society is to  
research, study, and preserve the local history in  
our community. We are a dedicated, all-volunteer,  
non-profit organization that owns numerous  
historical artifacts and an extensive photographic  
collection.

## CONTACT US

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Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/WesterlyHistoricalSociety/>

## President's Corner

*Thomas J. Gulluscio, Jr.*

Hello friends! As we continue to prepare for our  
annual May dinner we crossed one more to-do thing  
off our preparation list last weekend when Brenda  
Linton, Ellen Madison and I met to review the  
numerous applications submitted for the  
history award. The award is co-sponsored by the  
Babcock-Smith House Museum and the Westerly  
Historical Society. Awarded annually, this award is  
given to a person or persons grade 5 through  
adulthood, who furthers the mission of researching,  
studying, and / or preserving local history in our  
community.

We sincerely enjoy our duty to review the  
submissions and make our choice for the recipient.  
This year we selected two fine candidates, Joe Fusaro  
and Hugh Barton. Please join us at the annual dinner  
and help us congratulate these two passionate history  
lovers and learn a little bit more of what drives them in  
their passion and what they have discovered.

We still have officer positions to fill on our ever-  
growing executive board. Our most urgent needs are  
for treasurer and secretary. If you possess any of these  
skill sets and would like to join an amazing  
organization that is almost 110 years old, please  
contact me at [WHSPresident@gmail.com](mailto:WHSPresident@gmail.com).

See you soon,

Tom

## EDITOR'S NOTES

*Ann L. Smith*

It seems the more we do, the more there is to do.  
Our readers may have noticed that *Westerly's Witness*  
is relying on an eight-page format in place of the  
usual six in nearly every issue recently. That is  
because there is so much going on. And we're just  
getting started! Regular programs are back in full  
swing now that COVID is on the decline; the archives  
area is continuously processing new acquisitions,  
and our membership numbers are growing by leaps  
and bounds.

Detective Matt Hayden presented a great program  
on April 13, and folks were given the chance to see  
some of the rare items he has collected exploring the  
ground with his metal-detecting equipment. See our  
feature article on Matt Hayden in our November-  
December 2021 issue of *Westerly's Witness*, available  
at <https://westerlyhistoricalsociety.org/newsletters/>.

We have included a photo array of Matt's talk on the  
following page.

Robert (Bob) Peacock wrote this month's feature  
article, "The History of Westerly Cemetery #1" which  
begins on Page 5. For additional information about the  
Reverend Joseph Park, who is buried in Cemetery #1,  
readers can refer to *Fair Westerly*, "Who Was  
Reverend Joseph Park?" (pp. 60-66) by Thomas A.  
O'Connell. (*Fair Westerly* is available to purchase  
through our website and at Savoy Books in Westerly.)

We hope to see you at our Annual Meeting and  
Dinner on May 25. Ticket info is on Page 8.

We welcome your comments, suggestions and  
submissions and we have a new, separate email  
address for all things related to *Westerly's Witness*. It  
is [WHSNewsletterEditor@gmail.com](mailto:WHSNewsletterEditor@gmail.com).

# Program Photo Review: Digging Up the Past

By Ann L. Smith

Detective Matt Hayden was on hand April 13 to talk about the artifacts he has found while metal-detecting in and around Westerly. (Photos submitted by Ann L. Smith)



MATT HAYDEN EXPLAINS HOW HE FOUND THE MANY BUTTONS, COINS, AND BUCKLES IN HIS DISPLAY



AUDIENCE MEMBERS LISTEN ATTENTIVELY.



DETAILED VIEW OF SOME OF THE RARE ITEMS IN MATT HAYDEN'S COLLECTION



PROGRAM ATTENDEES GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH THE ANTIQUE ARTIFACTS.



MATT HAYDEN CHATS WITH WESTERLY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD MEMBER, BRENDA LINTON

To read about Matt Hayden's adventures in metal-detecting, see our previously published article, "Digging Up The Past: A Visit With Matt Hayden" at <https://westerlyhistoricalsociety.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/november-december-2021.pdf>



## **WESTERLY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **OFFICER NOMINATIONS AND UPCOMING ELECTION**

Election of Board Officers  
will take place at the Annual Meeting.

Our partial slate of nominees consists of

**Thomas J. Gulluscio, Jr.**  
for President

**Zachary J. Garceau**  
for Vice President

**We are seeking candidates for  
Secretary and Treasurer.**

**Interested persons need only to be a  
member in good standing of the Westerly  
Historical Society to qualify.**

Officers serve for a term of two years.

#### **The Recording Secretary shall:**

- Keep a full record of the proceedings of the Society
- Take care of and file all papers of the Society
- Maintain a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws, and a list of officers and committees of the organization

#### **The Treasurer shall:**

- Manage the financial affairs of the Society
- Render an account each month of all receipts and expenditures
- Develop a proposed budget based on input from the Executive Board and Committees
- Pay bills for budgeted items or as otherwise directed by a vote of the Executive Board
- Perform such duties as pertain to the office of Treasurer
- Make an annual report at the Annual Meeting of the Society

Please contact Thomas J. Gulluscio, Jr. at  
[WHSPresident@gmail.com](mailto:WHSPresident@gmail.com) if you are interested  
in volunteering.

## **~ ~In Memoriam~ ~**



**Henry Joseph Nardone, Sr.**  
died peacefully at his home on  
March 18, 2022. His wife of 70  
years, Mary Frances (Herley)  
Nardone predeceased him in  
2016. He was the son of  
Dominico and Theresa (Pilos)  
Nardone who emigrated to this  
country from Avellino, Italy in 1902.

He is survived by his five children, all of Westerly  
as well as eleven grandchildren and ten great-  
grandchildren. He is also survived by many nieces,  
nephews, great nieces and great nephews.

He was predeceased by his brothers: Gerard,  
Thomas and Joseph Nardone and by his sisters: Sarah  
Cardinal, Theresa Ballato, Mary Kathrine (Minnie)  
Burdick, Lena Robinson, Beatrice Smith and Anne  
Nardone.

Henry was a 1937 graduate of the Immaculate  
Conception School and a 1940 graduate of Westerly  
High School. He attended the University of Rhode  
Island, then joined the US Navy, completed Naval  
Studies at Yale University, and earned his Bachelor of  
Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from URI  
in 1944, and completed Midshipman's School at  
Columbia University. He was a member of Phi Sigma  
Kappa fraternity at URI. He was a Veteran of WW II  
and served in the Navy until 1955, earning the rank of  
Lieutenant.

After the war he was head of the Physics  
Department at the Naval Academy Preparatory School  
in Annapolis Maryland. He and his wife then moved  
to Boston, and he attended the Massachusetts Institute  
of Technology where he earned an advanced  
professional degree in Naval Engineering in 1952.  
Subsequently he moved back to Westerly and began  
his 37 year career at Electric Boat where he became  
the project officer of the Nautilus, the first nuclear  
powered submarine. He continued working at EB in a  
variety of managerial positions, including that of  
Manager of the Quonset Point facility.

His community service includes his membership  
on the Westerly School Committee for 17 years where  
he became Vice Chairman and later Chairman. In  
1972 he was appointed to the Rhode Island State  
Board of Regents for Education and remained on that

*(Continued on Page 7)*

# *The History of Westerly Cemetery # 1*

*By Robert Peacock*

The Westerly Historical Society owns a cemetery in Westerly which was donated to the society in 1917 by the Rathbun family. The cemetery includes six graves marked with carved headstones, at least six additional graves marked with uninscribed fieldstones, and at least eight and possibly many more additional unmarked graves. The interment dates range from 1747 to 1926.

For the past one hundred plus years, the Westerly Historical Society has owned and cared for the cemetery with the assistance of society members and community members including the generous efforts of Denise Siravo Lucey, the owner of much of the surrounding land. The well-maintained cemetery is registered with the Rhode Island Commission on Historic Cemeteries and is designated as Rhode Island Historical Cemetery Westerly #1.

Surrounded on three sides by a double row of thick chains set between short metal poles driven into granite blocks and boulders, and bordered on the fourth side by a stone wall, the cemetery is situated on a mild slope and is a slightly irregular rectangle shaped lot. The parcel of land is approximately sixty-five feet by twenty-two feet representing approximately 1,430 square feet or approximately three tenths of an acre. The Town of Westerly maps designate the land as parcel 124-9A. It is bordered by land owned by Denise Siravo Lucey and by land owned by the State of Rhode Island.

After taking possession, the Historical Society installed a large granite monument with an inscription that reads "Memorial to Rev. Joseph Park M.A. Pastor of the Presbyterian Church Which Stood Near Here 1731 – 1758. He formed a Sunday School in 1752 nearly 30 years before the experiment of Robert Raikes."

The cemetery includes the remains of Reverend Joseph Park whose headstone reads "In memory of Rev. Joseph Park, who died March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1777 in the 72<sup>d</sup> year of his age & 45<sup>th</sup> of Ministry. He was a faithful minister of the Gospel, a great patriot, a kind husband, a tender parent, a great friend to the widow and fatherless, and an excellent neighbor died 1777, aged 72"

The cemetery also includes the remains of Abigail Park, the wife of Reverend Joseph Park. Her headstone

reads "In memory of Abigail, wife of Rev. Joseph Park who died Oct ye 19th 1772 in the 68th year of age. A faithful wife, a tender mother, a kind neighbor, a compassionate and steadfast friend & an excellent Christian."

Sadly, the cemetery also includes the remains of Samuel Park, the son of Joseph Park and Abigail Park. His headstone reads "In memory of Samuel, son of Rev. Joseph Park & Abigail P. his wife. He died Sep 29, 1747 in the 7th year of his age."

Even sadder, the cemetery also includes the remains of Jonathan Green, the son of Benjamin and Hannah Park, and the grandson of Joseph and Abigail Park. His headstone reads "In memory of Jonathan Green, Son of Mr. Benjamin Park & Hannah Stanton his wife. He died March 25, 1761 in the 2d year of his life."

The cemetery is noted in Frederic Denison's "Westerly & Its Witnesses" which was published in 1878. Denison identified the cemetery as "Park Ground – this is on the north side of the post road, by the side of the highway, a few rods east of the residence of Christopher Rathbun, near where the shore road enters the post road." For reference purposes, a rod is approximately sixteen and a half feet.

Denison noted that the cemetery may also include the remains of Edwin Gavitt, a soldier of the Fourth Rhode Island Regiment who was wounded during the Civil War during a battle in Newburn, North Carolina and later died from his injuries in a hospital in New York.

The cemetery also includes the remains of William Clark Rathbun and Martha Rathbun. William was born in 1830 and died in 1926. His wife was born in 1832 and died in 1923. They were alive and perhaps living in the area when Frederic Denison visited in 1868 to document the cemetery. At that time however, the property was still owned by Christopher Rathbun, the father of William Rathbun.

According to town records, William and Martha Rathbun built a new home in 1902 on the property next to the cemetery on land that is now 342 Post Road. The property owned by the Rathbun's at that time included the cemetery, the house previously

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## Westerly Cemetery # 1

(Continued from Page 5)

occupied by Christopher Rathbun, and a stone foundation of the former Presbyterian Church. The Church was also referred to as the Park Church and by Frederic Denison as the Meeting House.

Perhaps knowing that death was approaching and perhaps desiring to ensure that the graves for him and his wife would be well cared for, the now elderly couple in their late eighties, decided to donate the land on which the cemetery lies to the Westerly Historical Society.

A large contingent of approximately sixty members of the Westerly Historical Society met the Rathbun's at the site on the morning of June 19, 1917. A brief acknowledgement and appreciation ceremony was held with William Segar representing the Society as they expressed their appreciation to William and Martha Rathbun. The Memorial Monument to Reverend Park was also unveiled during this transfer ceremony.

The following day, on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1917 at 10 AM, the Westerly Historical Society filed and recorded a deed with the Town of Westerly that read in part "Know all men by these presents, that I Wm Clark Rathbun in the Town of Westerly in the county of Washington in the State of Rhode Island hereinafter called the grantor in consideration of one dollar and other valuable considerations, to be paid by the Westerly Historical Society,... a certain tract or parcel land situated in said town of Westerly and known as the 'Park Burial Ground' ... the Grantor hereby conveys to the Grantees the right to pass and repass over his land to said lot from the highway known as the Post Road."

The deed includes a description of the property as "beginning at a drill hole in a boulder at the southeast corner of said land thence running northerly twenty feet to a stone wall, thence running westerly sixty five feet along the line of said wall, thence running southerly twenty two feet to an iron pin in the ground, thence running easterly sixty five feet to the point and place of beginning." The deed also notes that "this land hereby conveyed is the land once occupied by the Presbyterian Church of which Joseph Park was pastor from 1733 to 1757."

As noted, the deed included an additional specification of "and other valuable consideration"



A PICTURE OF RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL CEMETERY WESTERLY #1 IN ITS CURRENT WELL-MAINTAINED CONDITION.  
DENISE SIRAVO LUCEY HAS DONE AN INCREDIBLE JOB  
MAINTAINING THE AREA  
PHOTO: ROBERT PEACOCK

which was further explained in the deed with the inclusion of the following consideration that "The Grantor hereby reserves the right for himself and family to be interred in said lot." In compliance with their wishes, the Westerly Historical Society allowed two more burials after the land transfer occurred. Martha was interred in the cemetery six years later in 1923 and William was interred in the cemetery nine years later in 1926.

The deed was signed by the Grantors, William Rathbun and Martha Rathbun, and by the Grantees represented by Westerly Historical Society members Fred Stewart Greene, Byron J. Peckham, and Joseph L. Peacock.

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*The Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries Awareness and Preservation Weeks event is continuing through the end of May 2022. The events feature tours and clean-up events at historic cemeteries throughout Rhode Island. For more information and to view the calendar of events, visit <https://preservation.ri.gov/ricw-calendar>*



## From the Archives

Items sometimes wind up in our collection under unusual circumstances. People occasionally contact us from far-off places hoping to sell us an item that they either inherited or purchased. If we are lucky, people donate their items outright. Readers may recall how WHS members Sal and Micheline Lombardi of Scituate picked up an antique Watch Hill Yacht Club sailing trophy at a sale in Pennsylvania, then donated it to us (see [Westerly's Witness, April 2014](#).) A few months ago we acquired a saloon token from a man in England that was "Good for one beer" at the "Mahogany Palace, 8 Mechance [Mechanic] Street, Westerly." The Mahogany Palace was located at the current-day address of C.C. O'Brien's Sports Café in Pawcatuck, CT. (Recall that the entire Westerly downtown area, including the businesses just across the river in Pawcatuck, was commonly regarded as "Westerly" for many years.)

In the case of one very recent addition to our collection, a two-volume set of payroll books from C. B. Cottrell and Sons Company, we were happily surprised to find that they had been preserved nearby in the Babcock-Smith House vault for a number of years. Hugh Barton, who was completing the granite vault inventory for the Babcock-Smith House and Museum, found that the museum had these two payroll books that have little to do with granite. The items had been transferred to the museum as a permanent loan from the Westerly Public Library, probably around 1995. Thanks to a bit of help from Ellen Madison and Brenda Linton, they are now on permanent loan to the Westerly Historical Society.

Hugh Barton, it turns out, had to do some digging to identify the two payroll books when he first examined them. This is because they were only labeled as "CBC & Sons." A helpful clue was the identification of a section marked "foundrymen." We found the following brief history of the company on the internet at the University of Delaware Special Collections Department website:

"The C. B. Cottrell & Sons Company was founded in Westerly, Rhode Island, in 1855 by mechanic Nathan Babcock and machinist Calvert Byron Cottrell. The company, originally known as Cottrell & Babcock, opened as a general machine manufacturer, but soon focused on the manufacture of oscillating Printing presses. In 1868 the company began manufacturing printing presses exclusively. The company became known as the C. B. Cottrell & Sons

Company following the 1880 retirement of partner Nathan Babcock and subsequent introduction to the business of C. B. Cottrell's four sons... C. B. Cottrell & Sons Company continued to produce a wide line of printing presses throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, eventually becoming a subsidiary of the Harris-Seybold Company (later the Harris Corporation) in 1953."



ONE OF TWO PAYROLL BOOKS FROM THE C. B. COTTRELL AND SONS COMPANY ON PERMANENT LOAN TO THE WESTERLY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.  
PHOTO: ANN L. SMITH

C. B. Cottrell and Sons foundry was located at 100 Mechanic Street in Pawcatuck, but C.B. Cottrell was a native of Westerly and lived here for most of his life.

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### **Henry Joseph Nardone, Sr.**

*(Continued from Page 4)*

Board of Governors for Education, retiring as Vice Chairman. He had a long association with the Westerly Hospital where he served on the Board of Trustees for over 30 years and The Henry J. Nardone Community Center was named in his honor. He also served on the boards of the Westerly Pawcatuck YMCA, the Chamber of Commerce and the American Red Cross and was a Member of the Dante Society. He helped establish the CCD program at the Immaculate Conception Parish. In 2011 he and his wife were both awarded St. Edmund's Medal of Honor for living a life of virtue in the spirit of St. Edmund. He maintained a lifetime association with URI as a member of the Engineering Advisory Council and the URI Foundation. In 1993 he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Laws by the University. In 1991 he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Public Service from Rhode Island College. He endowed the Henry J. Nardone Family Scholarship in Mechanical Engineering at URI. He was an avid reader of history, politics and US Naval history. He was a long time member of the Westerly Historical Society and the Seaside Beach Club where he enjoyed many summers with his family and friends.

Mr. Nardone's funeral was held at the Immaculate Conception Church, Westerly on March 23, 2022. He is buried at the River Bend Cemetery in Westerly.

--Legacy.com

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**  
**The Westerly Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 91  
Westerly, RI 02891



## Westerly Historical Society Annual Meeting and Dinner Ticket Order Form

**Location: The Haversham Inn**  
**336 Post Road, Westerly RI 02891**

This year's dinner will consist of a buffet featuring beef sirloin tips, chicken francese, pasta marinara and seasonal vegetables. Assorted pastry, coffee, and tea are included.

Please send me \_\_\_\_ tickets for the Westerly Historical Society Annual Meeting and Reception on May 25, 2022 @ \$35\* each.

Enclosed please find my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_

State and Postal Code\_\_\_\_\_

*\*Ticket price has been subsidized in part this year following a decision by the WHS Executive Board.*

**Cocktails at 5:30 PM (Cash Bar)**  
**Dinner will be served at 6:00 PM**

Send this form with your check or money order before **May 18th** to:

**Westerly Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 91**  
**Westerly, RI 02891**

**Internet orders may be placed on our website at**

<http://westerlyhistoricalsociety.org/annual-meeting>

Or click on the words “**Annual Meeting**” from our home page.

Major credit cards and PayPal® accepted.