

# The Westport Library...

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## The Westport Library and Westport Historical Society Announce Partnership Ahead of Library Transformation Project

*Partnership Aimed at Keeping Library's Historical Files Accessible to Public During Library Renovation*

Westport, CT – The Westport Library announced a collaboration with Westport Historical Society to transfer and protect the Library's historical files during the 18-21 months of construction scheduled for the Library's [Transformation Project](#). In late August, select materials will be moved to the Westport Historical Society where they will be on long-term loan during the renovation project.

“The Library is fortunate to have a wealth of unique records that provide an unparalleled look back into Westport's history,” said **Westport Library Executive Director Bill Harmer**. “We are also fortunate to have a partner that shares our commitment to the culture of our community in the Westport Historical Society. Together we recognize the importance of preserving these files and continuing to make them available to the public during our Transformation Project.”

**Bob Mitchell, Board President of Westport Historical Society** stated: “We are very pleased to be able to assist and partner with The Westport Library in this way. The historical files are a natural adjunct to our own Archives. Broadening our resource base in this way ties directly into our Strategic Plan objective of closer collaboration with our fellow Westport cultural organizations, with the aim of deepening the appreciation of Westport's heritage among our town's residents and visitors.”

One of the collections being given on loan is the Library's extensive Local History Files. This research resource contains newspaper and magazine articles, brochures, reports, manuscripts and ephemera on town and school developments, businesses, arts and social organizations, historic buildings, events, world famous and locally significant residents and more. These items, covering topics of local and regional interest, were selectively chosen by reference librarians over many decades from newspapers, periodicals and other subscription sources, then organized and indexed; some were contributed by researchers and residents.

To prepare for the relocation to the Westport Historical Society, the Local History Files are being reviewed by local historians and archival experts, who are identifying documents that are unique and historically significant. After the

files are transported to the Historical Society, they will be made accessible to the public. The goal is to ultimately digitize the files so that they may be more easily accessed via the Library's catalog.

The Local History Vertical File will be available to the public after October 1, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., and by appointment at the Archives of the Westport Historical Society, 25 Avery Place. For more information, call 203.222.1424 or email [archives@westporthistory.org](mailto:archives@westporthistory.org).

In addition, the Library will be moving its Picture File collections to offsite, temporary storage. This collection contains clippings that were actively used by locally based commercial illustrators and artists associated with the Famous Artists School as visual references and models of subjects needed for assignments. The Westport Library Picture Files are divided into 2 collections: General Picture Files and Al Dorne Picture Files.

The general collection, which contains over half a million images, was started in 1916 by Westport librarian Edith Very Sherwood to support the burgeoning artist and illustrator community. The contents were selectively chosen and organized by reference librarians over many decades, and supplemented with collections donated by fellow illustrators, and/or their estates.

Al Dorne (1906–1965), the famed commercial illustrator and co-founder of the Famous Artists School, donated his personal picture files over a six-year period to the Westport Library, with the gift completed in 1962. Dorne amassed his collection over a 30 plus year career and the collection includes a wide range of subjects from fashion to aircraft to plant life.

Construction is scheduled to begin on the \$19.5 million renovation project at the Library in September. For more on the specific elements of the Transformation Project, visit [wltransformationproject.org](http://wltransformationproject.org).

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