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History of Westport, with related dates in regional and U.S. history

19,000 B.C.E. – Glacial ice melts, creating the spillway that formed the Saugatuck River.

10,000 B.C.E. – Paleoindian community in the area of Wilton.

6,000 B.C.E. – Evidence of prehistoric human activity in the Green's Farms and Old Hill areas of Westport.

4,000 B.C.E. – Prehistoric campsites at the Green's Farms, near Hillspoint Road, and the Indian River archeological site that extended south of the current railroad station on both sides of the Saugatuck River.

2,000 B.C.E. – 1700 C.E. – Native American soapstone artifacts

700 B.C.E. – 1,500 C.E. – Native American pottery shards

115 – 185 C.E. – Rim shards (from the rims of pottery) near site of Green's Farms Congregational Church

1,000 C.E. – Native Americans begin agriculture of corn, beans, pumpkins, squash, tobacco.

1620 – Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock

1635 – Colonists from the Massachusetts Bay Colony towns of Newtown, Dorchester and Watertown move to Connecticut.

1637 – Great Swamp War, in which the Pequot Indians were defeated by colonial troops. A granite monument near where I-95 crosses over the Post Road near the edge of Southport marks the area of the final battle.

1639 (January 14) – Connecticut becomes a Commonwealth under the "Fundamental Orders," or State Constitution, a document developed by the Connecticut colonists, outlining a set of principles for governance, but recognizing no allegiance to England. This document is the origin of the motto of Connecticut, "The Constitution State."

1639 – Fairfield founded.

1639-1661 – Roger Ludlow makes treaties with the local Pequonnock, Norwalke and Sasqua Indians.

1648 – Five farmers from Fairfield, the Bankside Farmers, acquire a strip of land from the Indians of Machamux, in the area around the current Beachside Avenue and Sherwood Island.

1650 – The General Court of Connecticut adopts “Ludlow’s Code,” Roger Ludlow’s codification of the laws of Connecticut, emphasizing civil liberties and equal protection.

1651 – Norwalk founded.

1654 – Mary Staples, wife of a prominent member of the Fairfield community, is accused by Roger Ludlow of being a witch. Her husband Thomas Staples sues Roger Ludlow for defamation, using Ludlow’s own legal code. Staples wins the suit, and is awarded damages of ten pounds.

1666 – Fairfield County established.

1673 – The oldest mail route in the United States is established, running from Boston to New York along the “King’s Highway,” now known as the Post Road. At the time, the trip along the route required two weeks.

1703 – First schoolhouse built on the commons area in Green’s Farms.

1704-1714 – Five major roads established: Compo, Long Lots, Roseville, North Avenue, Bayberry Lane, Sturges Highway.

1711 (June 12) – First meeting of the parish of Green’s Farms Congregational Church, in what was at the time called the “West Parish” area of Fairfield.

1714 – Tidal Mill built by John Cable at what is now referred to as Old Mill Beach, on Hillspoint Road. Hillspoint, shortened from “Hill’s Point,” was named after Thomas Hill, an early English settler.

1732 – Green’s Farms area officially recognized, though the area had already held the name unofficially for many years, based on the successful farming of John Green.

1756 – George Washington, then 24 years old, passes through Westport on his way from New York to Boston and back, crossing the Saugatuck by ferry near the river’s mouth (thus East Ferry and West Ferry Lane).

1767 – Ebenezer Jesup is born in Green’s Farms.

1770 – Daniel Nash, who would go on to become the founder of Westport, is born in Patchogue, Long Island.

1775 – George Washington, now commander-in-chief of the Colonial Forces, is met by Reverend Hezekiah Ripley, pastor of Green’s Farms Congregational Church. Washington is reported to have stopped at Disbrow Tavern, located where Christ and Holy Trinity church now stands.

1775 – Ebenezer Coley builds a structure at 165 Main St. that is used as a ship's store. This building eventually became The Remarkable Book Shop, now a Talbot's clothing store.

1777 (April 25) – The British land 26 ships with an invasion force of 1,850 soldiers at Compo Beach, with the goal of destroying the Revolutionaries' war supply center at Danbury. The cannons now placed at Compo beach mark the spot where the British landed.

1779 (July 6) – British troops sweep through the Green's Farms area, torching 15 homes, 11 barns, several stores and the second Green's Farms meetinghouse. The homes of Reverend Hezekiah Ripley and Deacon Ebenezer Jesup were among those destroyed.

1779 – The Boston Post Road established, under the direction of Postmaster General Benjamin Franklin.

1780 – George Washington again stops in Westport, reportedly meeting at Disbrow Inn with General Count de Rochambeau and General Marquis de La Fayette.

1784 – The Nash family moves to Saugatuck from Patchogue, Long Island. Daniel Nash is 14 years old at the time.

1789 – George Washington, now first president of the United States, passes through Westport by carriage on his tour of inspection of the northeastern states.

1790 – Tidal mill sold by the Cable family to the Ebenezer Sherwood Family.

1795 – Captain Ebenezer Coley builds a home for his son at 25 Avery Place, which would eventually become the home of the Westport Historical Society.

1798 – The first general store in the area is opened in Saugatuck, on the west side of the river.

1801 (January 31) – Horace Staples born in Fairfield.

1806 – The first market boat, the *Pedler*, sails from Westport to New York, marking the beginning of rapid growth in commerce by water for Westport. Regular trade routes were established to Boston, Providence, Texas and the West Indies.

1806 – Richard Henry Winslow born in Albany, New York.

1807 – First Post Road bridge across the Saugatuck built.

1810 (November 3) – The Sherwood male triplets are born: Francis, Franklin, and Frederick. All three would go to sea at the age of 16, and would become famous sea captains.

1810 – Levi T. Downes builds a general store on Main St., which was later used as a schoolhouse, and is now Tavern on Main.

1812 – Teachers required to pass an examination in English grammar.

1815 – First post office established in Saugatuck.

1816 – Easton Road is built, against the strong objections of the town of Fairfield, which feared a loss of commerce to Westport.

1824 – The Masons establish Temple Lodge No. 65 in Saugatuck.

1828 – The town's first newspaper, *The Saugatuck Journal*, is launched. The paper only published for two years.

1832 – Parishioners from Green's Farms Congregational Church split off to establish Saugatuck Congregational Church.

1832 – The Saugatuck Fire Company formed, with 16 volunteer fire fighters.

1834 – Cornerstone laid for Christ and Holy Trinity Church, at the corner of the Post Road and Ludlow St.

1835 – Westport is incorporated as a new town, including sections from Norwalk, Fairfield and Weston. On April 28, Daniel Nash submitted a petition with the signatures of 145 citizens of Saugatuck to the state government in Hartford to incorporate the new town of Westport. On May 28, the petition was granted. The first town meeting was held on June 16.

1835 (May 10) – John S. Jones born, who would go on to own the *Westporter*, later the *Westporter-Herald*, and become one of Westport's most influential citizens.

1835 – Universalist Church established at 215 Main St.

1837 – Ebenezer Banks Adams founds Adams Academy, a coed prep school, on land of David Coley. For the thirty years of its operation, the school attracted students from all over the east coast, who boarded with Westport families.

1840 – Westport allots underwater land in the Mill Pond to certain individuals for oyster cultivation.

1841 – First Vigilant Engine Company fire station built on Wilton Road, just beyond the intersection with the Post Road.

1842 – Green's Farms added to the town of Westport.

1843 – Civil rights of Jews officially protected by an act of the Connecticut State Legislature.

1845 – Westport town government assumes all responsibility for public primary education through the eighth grade, replacing the Church Society in this role.

1846 – Townspeople of Westport vigorously oppose the building of the railroad line through Westport. After a bitter battle, the town fails to block the charter for the railroad.

The Cockeroff family of New York agreed to sell some of their land to the railroad, as long as a 1,675-foot solid brick wall was built around their property. This brick wall now defines Stony Point, used as the entrance to “Stepford” in the film “The Stepford Wives.”

1848 (December 27) – Trains begin running from Bridgeport to New York.

1847 – Planning begins, under the leadership of Ambrose S. Hurlbutt, for a town cemetery, called Willow Brook.

1848 – The State of Connecticut outlaws slavery.

1852 – Saugatuck Bank founded by Horace Staples. The first office was across from the train station, but was soon moved to National Hall, becoming the First National Bank, later the Westport Bank and Trust.

1853 – Winslow mansion, called Compo House by Winslow himself, built at the corner of the Post Rd. and North Compo Rd. The building and grounds later served as a sanitarium, until purchased by Baron Walter von Langendorf. The grounds are now Winslow Park.

1853 – First record of Catholic services in Westport, in a small gathering at the Universalist Church.

1857 – Post Road bridge across the Saugatuck River built.

1860 – First Catholic church in Westport built, a small white building between Wright St. and Ludlow St., the First Church of the Assumption.

1860-1890 – Peak of onion farming in Westport, after which a plague of cutworm wiped out the entire onion crop, ending the trade.

1863 – Memorial Church of the Holy Trinity consecrated.

1863 – L.H. Gault & Son founded.

1869 – Edwark Hawkes Nash installs a new steam engine to run the Nash Mills sawmill. Lumber for the mill was supplied by Horace Staples.

1869 – Saugatuck Bridge on Bridge St. finally built, after much acrimony in the town over whether to build the bridge at all.

1870 – National Hall built at 2 Post Road West. Served at various times as a bank, a newspaper, a business, meeting and dance hall, school and theater. From 1993 to March of 2010, it was an upscale inn and restaurant.

1874 – Vigilant Engine Company No. 3 built on the west side of the river, near Main St.

1875 – John S. Jones founds the *Westporter* newspaper, with the motto “Independent in All Things, Neutral in Nothing.”

1877 – Westport Reading Room and Library Association formed.

- 1877** – Horse-drawn trolley built on Riverside Ave., from downtown to the railroad station.
- 1879** – Westport begins operation of an omnibus between downtown and Compo Beach.
- 1882** – First telephone installed in Westport, in W.E. Osborn's general store downtown, by the newly formed Bell Telephone Company.
- 1884** – Nash's ice house built at Nash's Pond. The ice house could hold 25,000 tons of ice, with insulating walls 16 inches thick. The ice was also insulated with sawdust from the Nash sawmill nearby.
- 1884** (April 26) – The first Staples High School is built on Riverside Ave., and opens with enrollment of 16 students.
- 1884** – Westport Fire Department formed.
- 1884** – New metal bridge built to replace the original wooden bridge on Bridge St.
- 1885** – Wilbur Cross becomes principal of Staples High School. Cross would go on to become Governor of Connecticut, from 1931 to 1939.
- 1886** – Westport Library Association granted charter by the state, with original location on the second floor of the Hurlbutt building on State St.
- 1887** – The first graduation of students from Staples High School.
- 1887** – Cedar Point Yacht Club formed.
- 1888** (March 11) – Blizzard, with drifts as high as 20 feet. All travel was impossible for four days.
- 1889** – Westport Historical Society established.
- 1890** – Westport Paper Company founded.
- 1890** – Allen's Clam and Lobster House built by sea Captain Walter Allen.
- 1891** – Embalmers' Supply Company, founded by C.B. Dolge in Brooklyn in 1887, moves to Westport.
- 1891** – The house at 25 Avery Place is left to Julia Wheeler, becoming known as "Wheeler House," later the home of the Westport Historical Society.
- 1892** – The Westport Water Company installs the town's first water supply system.
- 1892** – New railroad station at Green's Farms built, largely to accommodate Edward T. Bedford, whose home was close by.

1893 (December) – The schooner *John Bonnell* catches fire with a cargo containing kerosene, spilling hundreds of gallons of burning kerosene just off Cockenoe Island. A few residents of Westport are able to salvage some of the kerosene to help them with heating during a cold winter.

1895 – The Tidal Mill burns down.

1895 (March 7) – Horace Staples dies, at the age of 95.

1896 – Electric trolley replaces horse-drawn trolley on Riverside Ave.

1897 – Westport Parents and Teachers Association formed.

1899 – First automobiles appear in Westport. J. Nelson Bulkley, a local blacksmith, displays his “Stanley Steamer” steam-powered buggy.

1900 – Population of Westport is 4,017.

1900 (April 22) – The yellow brick First Church of the Assumption dedicated.

1902 – Hall-Brooke sanitarium opened, under the direction of Dr. David W. MacFarland.

1902 – David Bradley challenges ownership and public use of Compo Beach in *Bradley vs. Town of Westport*, in Bridgeport court. On November 21, the case is decided in favor of the town.

1903 – A total of 98 telephones in use in Westport.

1903 – The town offers leases on the Saugatuck river for cultivation of shellfish. This offer is soon withdrawn due to unmanageable demand.

1904 – Samuel Silver opens his store.

1907 (August 12) – The Woman’s Town Improvement Association is formed, with the goal of improving Westport’s roads. The WTIA eventually became the Westport Woman’s Club, located on Riverside Ave.

1908 – New red brick library building on State St. dedicated. This is now the “old library” building, housing a restaurant and shops.

1908 – New Town Hall built on State St., of native stone.

1908 – A total of 41 automobiles are prowling the streets of Westport.

1909 – Control of Staples High School transferred from the estate of Horace Staples to the town of Westport.

1909 – Town selectmen order private bath houses torn down on Compo Beach.

1910 (June 17) – Cannons at Compo Beach dedicated.

1910 – Minute Man statue dedicated.

1912 (October 3) – A train wreck on the trestle above the Saugatuck River kills seven people, and badly injures 10 more when the *Springfield Express* fails to slow down, and jumps the tracks at 60 miles per hour.

1914 – William S. Hart, the famous actor moves to Westport, living on King's Highway.

1915 – Robert Joseloff of Norwalk purchases land next to Town Hall, which in the early 1920's is used for the first Fine Arts Theater in Westport.

1916 – New wing added to Bridge Street School.

1917 – Bedford Elementary School built on Myrtle Ave., with a major financial contribution from Edward T. Bedford.

1917 – Westport Board of Finance established, with its members independently elected for oversight of Westport's finance after the town unexpectedly ran out of money.

1917 – Guards are posted underneath both sides of the Post Road Bridge, seen as vulnerable to sabotage during the war.

1917 – Harry Houdini appears at an event in Saugatuck sponsored by the Westport Woman's Club to raise money toward the war effort.

1917 (February) – Westport selectmen receive order to appoint 20 enrollment officers to supervise a census to coordinate enlistment for a possible war effort. The United States declares war on Germany on April 6.

1917 (May) – Westport Chapter of the American Red Cross formed.

1917 (August) – Edward L. Greenberg's department store opens.

1917 (September) – By a vote of 355 to 256, Westporters resoundingly reject prohibition. Two years later, national prohibition becomes law with the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment.

1918 – Central Hall of Hall-Brooke sanitarium built.

1918 (November 11) – World War I comes to end, with the signing of the armistice. All in all, 238 Westporters had served in the war, 7 had died, and many more had been wounded.

1919 (February) – John Gilbertie, of Clinton Ave., awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his service in the war, the only Westporter to receive this award. Gilbertie was also awarded the Italian War Cross by King Victor Emmanuel, and a third medal from the French government.

1919 (November 6) – American Legion Post 63 formed.

1919 – Westport's population reaches 5,500.

1919 – Influenza epidemic kills 58 Westporters.

1919 – Edward T. Bedford buys the Westport Hotel, building in its place a Tudor-style YMCA, completed in 1923. The new fire station next to the YMCA replaced the stables of the former Westport Hotel.

1920 – F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald move to Westport for the summer on their honeymoon, living in Wakeman Cottage on South Compo Rd.

1921 (December 11) – St. Paul Lutheran Church opens, at 98 Riverside Ave.

1922 – Rose O'Neill, poet, writer, illustrator, painter, sculptor and creator of Kewpie Doll, moves to Westport, purchasing a 10-acre estate along the Saugatuck.

1923 (December 17) – The KKK burns a 15-foot high cross in Westport. Rumours swirl of KKK meetings in the town.

1923 – The Hunt Club founded.

1924 – The original Bedford Junior High built, which became King's Highway Elementary.

1924 – Westport Bank & Trust Company opens its doors, in its new building near the YMCA.

1924 (February 13) – Westport Police Department formally organized.

1924 (March 26) – Westport Rotary Club founded.

1924 (April 11) – Westport Garden Club founded.

1924 – Homeowners in the Compo Beach area form the Compo Beach Improvement Association.

1925 – Green's Farms Elementary built.

1925 (October) – Mary E. E. Bolton opens Mrs. Bolton's School for Girls, in a three-story frame house on Church Lane across from Christ and Holy Trinity Church. The School began with four students, but by the spring of 1926 the enrollment had increased to eighteen students aged seven and under.

1925 – Statue of the World War I "Doughboy" commissioned to sculptor J. Clinton Shepherd.

1927 – Bridgeport Hydraulic acquires the water supply system for Westport.

1927 – Achorn's Pharmacy established.

1927 – Christie's Country Store opens on Cross Highway, run by Christie Masiello. Much of the produce from Masiello's 45-acre farm was sold at the store.

1927 – Westport Chamber of Commerce formed.

1927 – The Riverside Barbershop in Saugatuck opened by John Santella at 581 Riverside Ave.

1929 – Patrick Powers buys the estate of Frederick E. Lewis, and develops it into the private and exclusive Longshore Beach and Country Club.

1929 – E. T. Bedford donates an indoor swimming pool to the YMCA.

1929 – First traffic signals installed in Westport.

1930 – World War I “Doughboy” statue dedicated, at the intersection of the Post Road and Long Lots Road.

1931 (June 29) – The Westport Country Playhouse opens, with a production of *Streets of New York*.

1932 – Save the Children Foundation established.

1933 – Taylor’s Florist opens.

1934 – Westport Arts Committee formed, under the Works Progress Administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The Committee sponsored creation of 34 original pieces of art and 120 photographs of Westport by 1938, when the Committee was dissolved.

1934 (July 1) – Construction of the Merritt Parkway begins.

1935 – Howard Munce, illustrator and artist, moves to Westport.

1936 (October 22) – President Franklin Delano Roosevelt speaks from the steps of the YMCA during a campaign stop, the only currently serving president to visit Westport since George Washington.

1936 – Fable Funeral Home dedicated.

1937 – Henry Klein, a Hungarian immigrant, opens Klein’s at 44 Main St.

1937 – The state of Connecticut purchases Sherwood Island, which becomes the first state park.

1938 – Merrit Parkway opens.

1938 – Westport School of Music founded by Marguerite Maxwell.

1938 – The Woman’s Town Improvement Association becomes the Westport Woman’s Club.

1938 – Camp Mahackeno founded.

1938 (June 29) – The section of the Merritt Parkway from Greenwich to Norwalk is completed.

1939 – First Beach Commission formed.

1939 – The Town Green is named after Morris K. Jesup.

1939 (November) – The section of the Merritt Parkway from Norwalk to Trumbull is completed.

1939-1941 – Sarah B. Crawford of Westport serves as Connecticut's first female secretary of state.

1940 – Westport population is 8,258.

1941 – The first Yankee Doodle Fair is held.

1941 – The Westport Defense Unit is formed, drilling every Tuesday night at Bedford Elementary School.

1941 (December 7) – The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor. Raymond Orr, a resident of Westport, was aboard the destroyer *U.S.S. Bagley* in Pearl Harbor during the attack. This same day, Evan Harding opens Daybreak Nurseries, at 500 Main St.

1941 (December 8) – Westport conducts a full air-raid drill.

1942 (February 24) – Connecticut conducts a full blackout air-raid drill along the coast, with all lighting turned off, and all traffic stopped.

1942 (October) – Westport decides to remove the abandoned trolley tracks in town in an effort to salvage scrap metal for the war effort.

1942 – Westporters form Russian War Relief, Inc. to send aid to Russian troops battling the Nazis. A fundraiser is held at the Fine Arts Theatre, which shows a film about the Russian troops.

1943 – The Federal government leases the Penguin Inn on Hillspoint Road as apartments for workers in the war effort.

1943 – Artists in Westport hold an "Art Attack on the Axis" art exhibition at the Westport Public Library, raising \$151,000.

1943 – Westport launches the Victory Book Campaign, which ultimately sent 4,686 books to members of the armed services.

1943 – The Cuseo family sets a national record in having no fewer than eight sons from one family enlisted in the armed services.

1943 (July 4) – First Christian Science services held, at the Westport Inn.

1944 – The two Episcopal Churches in Westport merge to become Christ and Holy Trinity Church.

1944 – The Bedford Fund acquires the three-story home at 87 Imperial Ave. as headquarters of the Westport Woman's Club.

1944-1946 – Charles Lindbergh and Anne Morrow Lindbergh live in Westport, on Long Lots Road.

1945 – William S. Hart donates \$100,000 in honor of his sister to establish the Connecticut Humane Society on the Post Road.

1945 – Kowalsky Brothers General Contractors established, at 1141 Post Road East.

1945 – Baron Walter von Langendorff moves to Westport, purchasing the large property at the corner of South Compo Road and the Post Road.

1945 – Famous Artists Schools is launched by illustrator Albert Dorne. The FAS artists included Norman Rockwell. Offices were first located in the old Sasco Mill building at 1869 Post Road East, but then built headquarters on Wilton Road, at the intersection with the Post Road, behind National Hall.

1945 (April 12) – President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies. On April 18, Westport holds a memorial service for FDR on Jesup Green.

1945 (July) – Westporters hold a war bond drive to raise enough money to pay for a complete B-29 Super-Fortress bomber, the kind user recently in raids over Tokyo.

1945 (August 14) – Japan surrenders unconditionally. In all, 1,380 Westport men had served in the war, and 43 had been killed or listed as missing action.

1946 – Barracks for returning servicemen are built on land owned by the town on North Compo Rd.

1946 – Birchwood Country Club formed.

1946 (May 2) – A truck traveling on the Post Road near Sylvan Avenue crashes, setting off a spectacular fire and explosion that kills the Westport Fire Chief, the former Fire Chief, two other firefighters, and injures eight other people. On June 22, Babe Ruth visits the injured firefighters in Norwalk Hospital, signing baseballs for them.

1947 – William H. Torno establishes Torno Lumber at 76 Post Road East.

1947 – Lucille Lortel launches the White Barn Theatre and Museum.

1947 (January) – The Westport Housing Authority announces the sale of pre-fabricated housing to address the crucial housing shortage. A site near Vani Court is selected as the location.

1949 – Christian Science Church built at 55 South Compo Road.

1949 (February 26) – Westporters vote to change local government from a Town Meeting system, criticized by some as representing only the special interests who showed up for the meetings, to a Representative Town Meeting system, with elected representatives from six districts.

1950 – Westport population is 11,432.

1950 – Saugatuck Congregational Church is moved from South Compo Road to its present site on the Post Road, a distance of about 600 feet, at a rate of a foot a minute. The moving of the church was featured in Life magazine.

1950 – The Bedford Fund acquires the Sunday school meeting house of the Saugatuck Congregation Church, and moves it in two sections to form the auditorium of the Westport Woman' Club at 87 Imperial Ave.

1950 (November 30) – A major hurricane hits Westport, killing two people, and knocking the steeple off the Green's Farms Congregational Church. The steeple spent two month on the church's front lawn, before being hoisted back up.

1951 (June 15) – Westport Little League formed.

1953 – Coleytown Elementary School built.

1954 – Prince Aly Kahn visits native Westporter and film star Gene Tierney, who grew up in Green's Farms.

1955 – The *Westporter-Herald* merges with *The Town Crier*.

1955 – Compo Shopping Center expands to nearly double in size.

1955 – Gregory Peck in Westport to film location shots for the film "The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit."

1955 – The Westport Planning and Zoning Commission revises zoning to preserve more open land in the face of rapid development.

1955 (June 27) – Parker-Harding plaza opens. Before the plaza was built with landfill, the Saugatuck River came up to the back of the stores on Main St.

1956 – New wing built for the library.

1956 – Swezey Jewelers opens, at 139 Main St.

1956 – Westport Community Theatre founded, known as the Westport Players.

1956 – Ruth Steinkraus-Cohen founds the International Hospitality Committee of Fairfield County.

1956 – Westport Young Woman's League formed.

1957 – St. Luke's Roman Catholic Church built.

1957 – Burr Farms Elementary School built.

1957 – Westport's "garbage crisis," finally solved when the Westport Woman's Club agrees to a landfill on its site at the edge of the Saugatuck River. In October, the Woman's Club sends out invitations for a tea party to be held on top of the dump. About 500 people show up for the festivities.

1957 – Herbert E. Baldwin elected First Selectman.

1957 (January) – The Westport RTM officially adopts a town charter, strengthening the power of the RTM. Previously Westport had operated only under state law.

1957 (March 7) – The Nike Missile Site opens on North Ave. The town had strongly opposed the Nike site, and so contentious were the RTM meetings over the issue that a CBS News crew was sent out to film a meeting for Eric Sevareid's Sunday afternoon television show. Westport author Max Shulman wrote a satirical novel about the episode, *Rally 'Round the Flag Boys!*, turned into a movie in 1958 starring Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward.

1957 (October 22) - The Kathleen Laycock Country Day School, serving students from Sixth through Twelfth Grades, is incorporated.

1958 – Population of Westport is 17,000.

1958 – The new Staples High School opens at 70 North Ave.

1958 – Ed Mitchells opens, in an 800 square-foot. former plumbing supply store in Compo Acres.

1958 – Annual Roast Beef Dinner at the Rotary Club established by Ed Mitchell.

1958 – Lars-Eric Lindblad, world famous explorer and conservationist, opens Lindblad Travel, at One Sylvan Road North.

1958 (January 1) – The New England Thruway opens. The Thruway, running through the middle of Saugatuck, had displaced 42 homeowners, and the Saugatuck Methodist Church.

1958 (June) – Mid-Fairfield County Youth Museum Association founded.

1959 – Westport is recognized by the National Municipal League and *Look* magazine as an "All America City."

1959 (November) – The Kathleen Laycock Country Day School moves to 35 Beachside Ave.

1959 (April 15) – Local radio station WMMM AM goes on the air. The station's call letters stood for "*Westport's Modern Minute Man.*"

1959 (November 18) – Saugatuck Harbor Yacht Club formed.

1960 – Westport acquires Longshore Beach and Country Club, and opens it to the public.

1960 – Minute Men Cleaners established.

1960 – Richard Nixon wins Westport's vote by a nearly 2-1 margin: 6,842 to 3,825

1961 – The New World Affairs Center opens on Taylor Place.

1961 – Sportsmen of Westport founded.

1961 – Sam Sloat Coins founded, at 606 Post Road East.

1961 (June 18) – New St. Paul Church opens, at 41 Easton Rd.

1961 (July 4) – Just before dawn a lone gunman enters the Westport Police station, and began firing a semi-automatic pistol, wounding a police officer. When the gunman fled into the parking lot, he fired again, wounding another officer. The police returned fire, and the gunman was taken alive, but died of his wounds a few weeks later in Norwalk Hospital. Police later reported the assailant as Brendan McLaughlin, an advertising executive and ex-Marine, who earlier that evening had shot and killed his father on Gorham Island Road.

1961 – Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward move to Westport.

1961-1962 – Hillspoint Elementary School built.

1962 – The Remarkable Book Shop opens, at 165 Main St.

1963 – Ed Mitchells relocates to the Westport National Bank building on Colonial Green.

1963 – Westport's first Summer School program opens.

1964 – Green's Farms Pre-school opens, at 71 Hillandale Rd.

1964 – Bert Chernow, artist and art teacher at Green's Farms Elementary launches the Westport Schools Permanent Art Collection (WSPAC), with the ideal that all Westport children should be surrounded by art in the schools.

1964 – A year after president John F. Kennedy's death, an eight-foot long bronze plaque commemorating Kennedy is placed on the outside wall of the Staples High School administration building: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

1964 (March 5) – *The Westport News* begins publication. Jo Fox Brosious becomes the paper's first editor.

1964 (May 22) – Rev. Martin Luther King preaches at Temple Israel.

1964 – The Willows Medical Center, affectionately called "Fort Apache" is built.

1964 – Coastwise Marine opens for business.

1965 – Coleytown Junior High built.

1965 – The Three Bears restaurant opens.

1966 – Lars-Eric Lindblad leads the first tourist expedition to Antarctica.

1967 – United Illuminating Company of Bridgeport announces plans to build a 14-story nuclear power plant on Cockenoe Island, less than a mile off Compo Beach. Jo Fox Brosious, editor of the Westport News, leads a vigorous campaign against UI's plan. In August the Westport RTM votes unanimously to take all possible steps to save the island.

1967 – Baron Walter von Langendorff purchases the 32-acre property on East State Street at the corner of North Compo Road.

1967 – John J. Kemish elected First Selectman.

1967 – Mario Sacco and Frank Demace open Mario's Place across from the railroad station.

1967 (December 15) – Staff Sergeant Michael Paquin becomes the first Westporter killed in the war in Vietnam.

1967 – Timothy Breen, a resident of Westport, turns in his draft card to a minister at an anti-Vietnam war protest in Boston. The draft board responds, as was its practice, by punishing him through reclassifying him 1-A, for immediate drafting into the armed forces. Breen sued the draft board, in *Timothy J. Breen v. Selective Service Local Board No. 16*. The case finally reached the Supreme Court, Westport attorney Emanuel Margolis, supported by the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union, won a unanimous decision in favor of Breen, forcing the draft board to cease its practice of punitive reclassification of protestors.

1968 – New boat marina at Longshore dedicated.

1968 (May 13) – The Westport recreation and education boards unanimously approve a racially integrated summer program for children sponsored by Action for Bridgeport Community Development.

1968 (November) – A referendum on whether to create a Transit District for Westport is approved by a large margin, the first step toward partial federal funding for a local bus system.

1969 (September) – Westport residents opposing the war begin a petition drive urging the RTM to adopt a resolution asking the President and Congress to end the war.

1969 (September) – Project Renaissance, a self-help drug treatment program, opens its doors in response to widespread drug and alcohol abuse in Westport.

1969 (October) – By a vote of 17-15, the RTM passes a resolution requesting withdrawal from the war. This unprecedented action by a town resulted in a front-page story in the New York Times.

1969 (October 15) – 1,200 students from Staples High School march from Staples to downtown Westport to protest the war.

1969 – Under pressure due to efforts at legislation from Westporters to shift eminent domain away from the utility companies, United Illuminating finally decides to offer to sell Cockenoe Island rather than become subject to this fundamental legal shift. On April 17, the Westport RTM votes to appropriate the \$200,000 necessary to meet UI's offer. Cockenoe became part of Westport.

1970 (April) – A proposal of busing a limited number of children from Bridgeport in to Westport under Project Concern, a program funded by the government and the state and supported by several religious groups in Westport, encounters strong opposition from conservatives in town. Quickly a group calling itself BEST (Bipartisan Education Study Team) appears to coordinate opposition to the proposal. A Project Concern program began in September at Assumption School, involving 25 students bused in from Bridgeport. This set an example of how a conservative Catholic institution could support the program on moral grounds, and run it successfully. The Westport Board of Education voted for the proposal, 3-2. In response, conservative groups in Westport quickly called for the recall of the chairman of the Board of Education, Joan Schine. The recall drive ultimately failed, and in 1971 25 students from Bridgeport entered Burr Farms School, and other students from Bridgeport entered Coleytown and Bedford Elementary.

1970 - The Kathleen Laycock Country Day School changes its name to Greens Farms Academy, and begins its transition to a fully co-ed school by admitting 23 boys to a group of approximately 300 girls at the school.

1970 – Westport acquires the 38-acre Wakeman Farm on Cross Highway near North Ave. from Isaac Wakeman. In the early 1990's an acrimonious dispute would develop over the use of this property for playing fields by the town.

1970 – *The Town Crier* ceases publication.

1970 – Stauffer Chemical company breaks ground for new offices at Nyala Farm, after a long and bitter dispute within the town.

1971 (May) – Famous Artists Schools files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

1971 – Downtown Merchants Association formed, to promote business and raise money for beautification and maintenance in the downtown area.

1971 – Fairpress publication founded by Jo Fox Brosious.

1972 – New and larger St. Paul Church built, with the previous church building now serving as the parish hall.

1973 – Westport Historic District Commission established.

1973 – The Alcohol and Drug Dependency Council is founded in Westport.

1973 – The Levitt Pavilion opens, on top of the former town dump. For several years visitors to events at the pavilion were treated to occasional whiffs of gas erupting from the landfill below.

1973 – The Greening of the Post Road is launched, with planning supervised by Frank Geiger. In all, 70 trees are planted along the Post Road.

1973 (January 23) – Richard Nixon announces the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam, technically ending the war, though U.S. troops would not complete their withdrawal until April 30, 1975.

1973 (November 7) – Jacqueline Heneage defeats Jack Kemish, becoming first selectman of Westport, the first Democrat since 1948 and the first woman to win the office. Heneage would serve until 1981.

1974 - Mid-Fairfield County Youth Museum Association becomes the Nature Center for Environmental Studies.

1974 – Westport Girls Softball League formed.

1974 (August 10) – The Minnybus system makes its debut, with a fleet of 8 buses, capable of carrying 16 passengers each. The buses are a distinctive red and white.

1976 – The Bicentennial Quilt of Westport is designed by Naiad Einsel, and assembled by 33 Westport women, who spent the entire year sewing it. The quilt now hangs in Westport Town Hall.

1977 – Rippe's Farm closes, replaced by Harvest Commons, the first condominiums in Westport.

1979 (October 31) – The *Westport News* reports that eight Westport teenagers had overdosed on angel dust.

1980 – Westport Community Action Now is founded, to help prevent alcohol and drug abuse.

1980 (September 28) – First service at the new Christian Science Church at 55 South Compo Road.

1981 – Sidney Kramer founds Save Westport Now, an organization calling for a halt to commercial development until a new town plan is completed.

1981 – Westport psychologist David Singer founds Mohonk House, a home for boys aged 12-18 who are orphaned, from divorced families, or otherwise unable to live with their families.

1981 – Local businessman Arnold Kaye is repeatedly turned down for his request to build a video arcade on the Post Road.

1981 (February 23) – Wheeler House, at 25 Avery Place, is purchased from Christ and Holy Trinity Church as home of the Westport Historical Society.

1982 – Paul Newman founds “Newman’s Own,” which would go on to donate more than \$300 million to charity as of 2011.

1982 (January 22) – Arnold Kaye chains himself to a steel post in Town Hall to protest being turned down for his proposal for a video arcade. He had notified the Westport Police ahead of time, so he is unchained within about ten minutes, but has made his point.

1982 (June 14) – Arnie’s Place opens at 1365 Post Road East, is shortly closed down again by order of the Superior Court, but opens permanently a month later.

1982 (November) – First Selectman Bill Seiden appoints the Homeless People’s Committee, to address issues of the homeless in Westport.

1983 – The Red Barn restored.

1983 – The soup kitchen serving the homeless free meals attracts the attention of Phil Donahue, who invites Human Services Director of Westport David Kennedy and Reverend Ted Hoskins of Saugatuck Congregational Church to appear on his show.

1983 – The Gorham house on Gorham Island is knocked down by a developer, who replaces it with a 40,000 square foot office building.

1983 (June 28) – A 100-foot section of I-95 over the Mianus River in Greenwich collapses and falls into the river, killing three motorists whose cars were on the span at the time.

1983 (September 14) – Baron Walter von Langendorff dies, unsettling arrangements for the transfer of his property to the town of Westport.

1984 – The Italian Festival is organized by the Sons of Italy of Westport.

1984 – Green’s Farms Elementary School is converted to the Westport Arts Center.

1985 – Project Return is launched, providing a home for seven young women at a time in a renovated building on North Compo Road.

1985 – Westports of the World (WOW) is founded, linking 28 towns named Westport all over the world.

1985 (June 26) – Celebrations begin for Westport’s 150th anniversary, and Connecticut’s 350th. Two books about Westport were completed that year, and presented at Town Hall as part of the celebration: Jack and Dorothy Tarrant’s *A Community of Artists* and *Westport...a Special Place*, written and compiled by Eve Potts, and designed by Howard Munce. The celebrations also included a short play written by Ed Bryce, re-enacting the founding of Westport by Daniel Nash. The play was presented on the same day, and in the same place, that Nash left for Hartford requesting Westport’s incorporation as a new town.

1985 (May 27) – A new flag for Westport, designed by Miggs Burroughs and sponsored by Rodney Dangerfield, is unveiled.

1985 (November) – Democrat Dorothy S. Hauhuth is elected First Selectman. She would serve until 1989.

1986 – The “Doughboy” statue is moved from the Post Road at the intersection with Long Lots Road to the town common in front of Town Hall, the former Bedford Elementary School.

1986 – When the state proposes replacement of the historic metal bridge over the Saugatuck on Bridge Street with a “McBridge,” Westporters vociferously object. After much wrangling, the state DOT agrees to completely restore the bridge. After a temporary bridge is built to the side of the historic bridge, the bridge is disassembled piece by piece and completely restored.

1986 – The Mobil station at 90 Main St., an inherent part of downtown Westport for nearly 50 years, is torn down and replaced by a retail store with condominiums on the upper floors.

1986 – John Huminski, a Westport resident born with cerebral palsy, founds “I Can Do It Too,” a non-profit organization sponsoring athletes, disabled or able-bodied.

1986 (September 1, Labor Day) – The new library built on top of previous landfill for the town opens.

1987 – The large salt marsh at Wilton Road and King’s Highway North is given to the Aspetuck Land Trust.

1987 – By a vote of 26-8, the RTM votes to condemn the property of Baron von Langendorff’s estate. A referendum of 54 to 46 percent supports the acquisition of the property by eminent domain through condemnation. The town eventually acquires the property at a cost of \$9.42 million. In a contest to suggest a name for the park, Winslow Park is chosen.

1987 – Arthur Tauck of Tauck Tours buys the Fairfield Furniture Store, converting it into a top-notch inn and restaurant called National Hall.

1988 (May 31) – The trial in “The Salad Wars” begins, pitting Julius Gold, owner of Gold’s Delicatessen, against Paul Newman, who had recently founded “Newman’s Own.” Gold claimed that Newman had promised him a share of the profits from Newman’s salad dressing. Gold lost the suit.

1988 – Paul Newman founds The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp a nonprofit, year-round center serving children and their families coping with cancer, sickle cell anemia, and other serious illnesses.

1989 – Lindblad Travel goes out of business.

1990-1992 – Post Road bridge widened.

1991 – Joan Schine, former chairman of the Westport Board of Education, is awarded the Woman of Valor award by Education Equity Concepts, a non-profit group based in New York, for her sustained efforts in community service for children.

1992 – Phase I of The Riverwalk and Gardens is completed, running from the new library to Jesup Green.

1993 – Ed Mitchells becomes Mitchells of Westport, acknowledging the participation of multiple generations of the Mitchell family in the business.

1993 – Fairpress ends publication.

1993 – The Minuteman weekly newspaper begins publication.

1994 – Bridge St. bridge widened.

1994 – Reverend Ted Hoskins of Saugatuck Congregational Church leaves Westport to join the Maine Seacoast Mission.

1994 (September 18) – Arnie's Place, the video arcade at 1365 Post Road East, closes down permanently.

1995 – Westport forms a Sister City program with the city of Yangzhou, China to promote cultural exchange.

1996 – Westport reclaims Green's Farms Elementary school back from the Westport Arts Center.

1996 (November 29) – The new ice skating rink at Longshore opens.

1997 – The Remarkable Book Shop closes, replaced by a Talbot's Petite.

1997 – The Teen Coffeehouse opens at historic Toquet Hall, providing a gathering place for Staples and Green's Farms Academy students.

1997 – A new pool is installed at Longshore.

1998 – Al Pia, drama teacher at Staples for 30 years, retires. His gifts in guiding Staples Players productions had won no fewer than six New England Theater Conference awards.

1999 – Klein's rents its storefront space at 44 Main St. to Banana Republic.

1999 – Phase II of The Riverwalk and Gardens is completed, running from Jesup Green to the Post Road.

1999 – During renovation of the ground floor at 44 Main St. by Banana Republic, workers discover a 28-foot-long mural created by Edmund M. Ashe. The mural had been hidden behind drywall for 50 years. Banana Republic chose to preserve and restore the mural, now featured prominently in the store.

2000 – Westport's population is 26,644.

2000 – The Kids' Wall project is initiated. The 6-foot by 44-foot wall is composed of 64 individual panels, each panel created by one of the 64 art classes in the Westport Middle Schools, and is installed at the children's pool at Longshore.

2000 – The Staples Players, under the direction of Judy Luster, are chosen to represent the United States at the Edinburgh Theatre Festival.

2004 – Klein's store at 44 Main St. closes.

2006 (February 18) – Swezey's Jewelers, 139 Main St., closes its doors.

2008 – The library celebrates its 100th anniversary.

2009 (August 29) – The Riverside Barber Shop closes at its original location of 581 Riverside Ave. after 82 years of operation. The shop is now open at 231 Post Road West, Second Floor.

2010 (March 8) – The Inn at National Hall closes down, as the result of the effort of the owners of the building to sell it. As of this writing, National Hall is closed, the building has not been sold and is unoccupied.

2011 (May 20) – An unnamed attorney purchases the U.S. Post Office building at 154 Post Road East, with plans to convert it into a 10,000 square foot space for retail and restaurant use.