

News from the

WHATELY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

December 2025

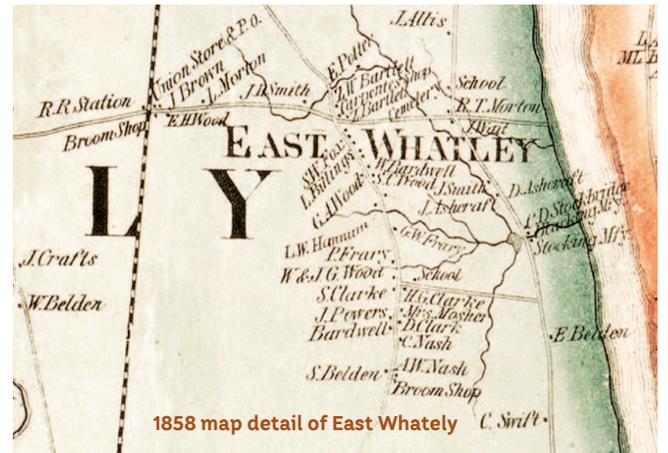
Post card, Connecticut River and Sunderland Bridge from Whately, c. 1920.

NEW ACQUISITIONS • This fully functional cast-iron **miniature sewing machine** (WHS 2025.086.001), produced in 1897 by Smith & Egge of Bridgeport, CT, is a wonderful example of late 19th-century ingenuity. The Little Comfort Improved model, which originally sold for \$2, was marketed to adults, although also considered for use as a toy. It was donated, together with its original packaging, by Lloyd Brooks of New Salem, MA, in memory of his parents, Carl (1931–2017) and Wilma Brooks (1931–2025), who moved to their property on Chestnut Plain Road in 1961.

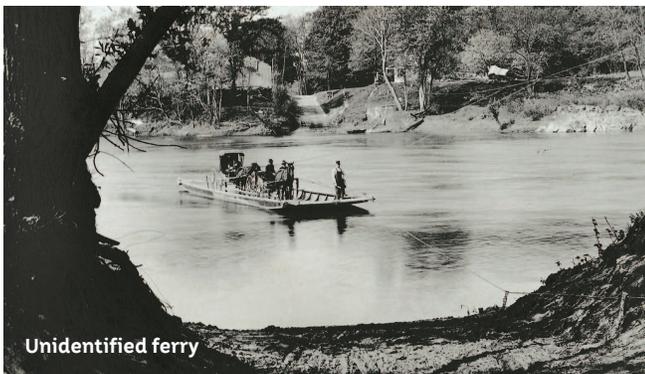


Mary Sanderson Bisbee of Williamsburg stopped by the Historical Society this fall to donate three 19th-century photographs in fine condition. Two, by noted

photographer and artist Elbridge Kingsley, depict scenes of Whately Glen; they complement WHS' extensive collection of Kingsley photos. The third is a **photo of a ferry** carrying two horse-drawn carriages across a wide river. (WHS 2025.088.001) We don't know if the scene depicts the Connecticut River—if you recognize the site, let us know by emailing info@whatelyhistorical.org or stopping in the Historical Society.



1858 map detail of East Whately C. Smith



Unidentified ferry

Museum in Whately Town Hall, 194 Chestnut Plain Road, is open Tuesdays 9 am–12 pm; first and third Saturdays, 10 am–12 pm, June–December; and during special programs.

NEW INSTALLATION • Historical Society volunteers have mounted in the first-floor hall of Town Hall an 1858 5' x 5' **map of Franklin County** (WHS 1981.212.001). Henry Francis Wallings (1825–89), a Rhode Island civil engineer, produced maps for most of the Northeast U.S. and Canada. The Franklin County map contains both road names and topographical details, as well as detailed inserts of major towns in the County—three of which depict East Whately, Whately Town Center, and West Whately. House sites are labeled with the names of current property owners. Enjoy this lovely reminder of how much—and how little—has changed in the past 167 years during your next visit to Town Hall. But please don't touch!

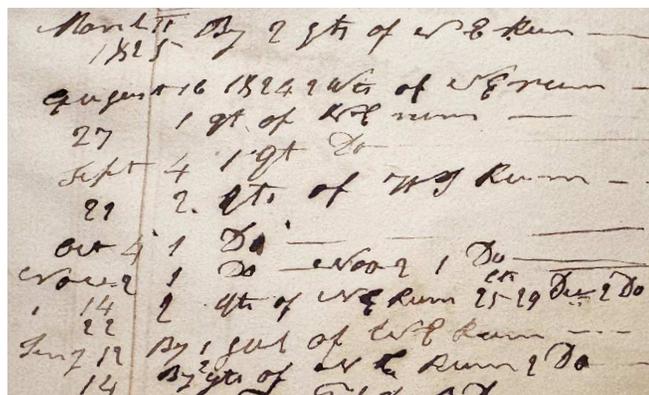


LAST-MINUTE HOLIDAY SHOPPING?

Our new sweatshirts and tee shirts are great gifts, whether your friends and family members are still in town or far afield! Go to whatelyhistorical.org/shop/. We will ship your items upon request.

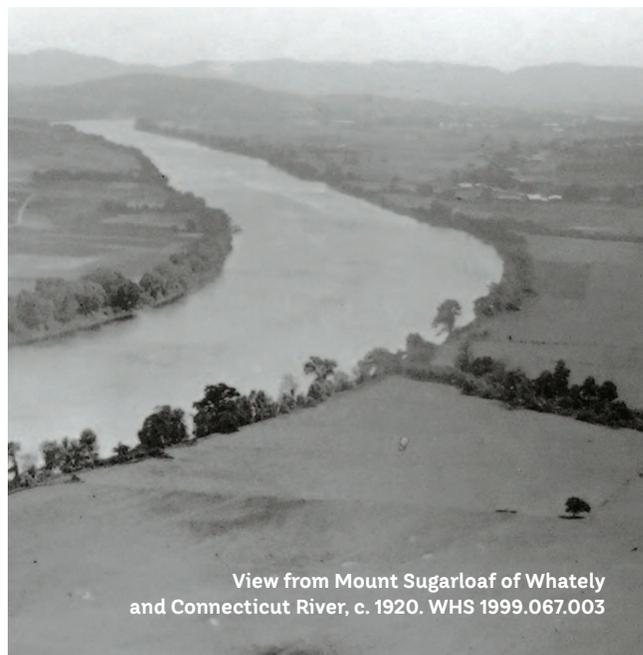
2025-2026 CALENDAR NOTES

- Over 400 visitors have toured our **What's for Dinner?** exhibit this year—record attendance! If you haven't seen the exhibit, or missed the digital slide shows we added in August, stop by on the mornings of December 6, 9, 16, or closing day: Friday, December 19, 1–4 p.m.
- We'll be **closed for the end-of-year holidays** from December 20–January 5, after which we'll return to our usual schedule: open Tuesday mornings, 9–12, or upon request, until late May.
- Mark your calendars for the **2026 Whately Historical Society festivals**: Sunday, May 24, noon–2 p.m., following the Grange-sponsored parade and veterans' memorial service, and Sunday, September 27, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. See you there!



1824-25 entries in Zebina Bartlett's (1780–1862) account book record rum imported from the West Indies to Whately via the Connecticut River (WHS 2022.231.001).

FUTURE EXHIBIT • The Connecticut River is just around the bend! We're up to our necks in planning our 2026 exhibition and special programs, which will center on the Connecticut River. Bridges, fishing, ferries, shipping, farms, floods and pollution—we have much to investigate and explain. If you have memories, photographs, or objects that will help us tell the tale of Whately and the Connecticut River, please be in touch at info@whatelyhistorical.org.



View from Mount Sugarloaf of Whately and Connecticut River, c. 1920. WHS 1999.067.003

Support the Historical Society

- Donate items that illustrate Whately's past and complement our current holdings. Write about your possible gift to info@whatelyhistorical.org, or stop in to the Museum on Tuesday, 9 am–12 pm.
- Volunteer to help maintain our collections and organize our programs and events. Call Adelia Bardwell at (413) 665-3837 or drop by the Museum.
- Support WHS with a donation of \$10 or more, by mailing us a check (P.O. Box 7, Whately, MA 01093) or by credit card or PayPal at www.whatelyhistorical.org. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Museum in Town Hall, 194 Chestnut Plain Road, Whately
whatelyhistorical.org · info@whatelyhistorical.org
 Visit us on Facebook: [whatelyhistorical](https://www.facebook.com/whatelyhistorical)