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### Time Traveling: Exploring Port Washington And Library History

Student-created theater for teens and tweens.

By [Adina Genn](#) [Email the author](#) 8:15 am

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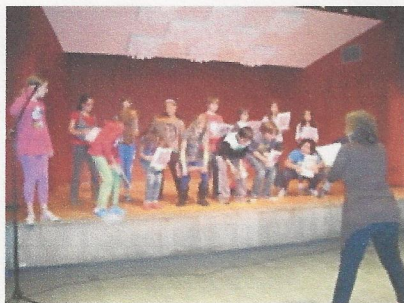
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Some Port Washington teens and tweens are time-traveling all the way back to 1892. Things looked different then, including the [Port Washington Public Library](#), which was yet to call its current Main Street location home.

Instead, the library was housed in the front parlor of the Port Washington home of [Wilhelmina Mitchell](#). The library, and of course, life in Port Washington, has evolved ever since. It's a story the young time travelers are gearing up to tell, thanks to a program called "Our Town Library: Family Theater," part of the library's year-long 120th anniversary celebration.

"It's student-created theater," said Elise May, an international teaching artist based in Port Washington, who is leading the production.

Beginning in March, May steered Port Washington 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders on monthly journeys back in time to explore changes in the library's history, using the performing arts as a tool.

Together, they continue to discover "how the library has changed the lives of the people in town and how the library is still changing to accommodate the needs of Port Washington," May said.

That includes examining a time when there was only one phone in the whole town, or when people wrote with quills, and the popular songs and books of the time, May said.

Some of the material that's emerged from these sessions – whether it's music, writing, drama or art – will be used in a November storytelling performance open to the public.

Now May, who is working with creative director Katie Lyons and musical director Jake Glickman, says the production is gaining momentum.

On Wednesday, May is leading local tweens in an acting and improvisation workshop to put together "a day in the life" in Port Washington from 1892 and 2012. They even glimpse into the future.

And in August, some of the library's junior aides will spend a night in the library, painting murals for the November production.

Then on Sept. 22, there will be a meeting for teen and tween writers, singers, actors, artists and musicians who are interested in spending six Saturday mornings on a "storytelling adventure" all about Port Washington and its library. These sessions will lead up to the Nov. 23 performance.

The program was made possible through grants, including the JPMorgan Chase Re-grant Program (through the Huntington Arts Council) and the Jackie Spielman Storytelling Fund.