

Copy of a Petition to the Legislation  
by the  
Committee on Landings  
Presented by Dr. Sisson, Representative

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives,  
of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in General Court as-  
sembled:

The inhabitants of the Town of Westport by their committee undersigned respectively represent, that there are located on the margin of the rivers in said Town several lots or parcels of land, formerly laid out by the proprietors of the Town of Dartmouth for landing places; and have been used by the public as such for more than a century; that in 1787 the westerly portion of said Dartmouth was incorporated into a separate Town by the name of Westport and it was agreed by the said Town that all the public lands, or landings, formerly belonging to the said Dartmouth, should be the property of the inhabitants of the respective Town in which they were situated; and from that time till the present, the said Town of Westport has exercised acts of jurisdiction and ownership over those within her limits, and has exchanged a portion of one of them, with an individual for land bordering on the river, thereby promoting the public convenience by enlarging the most useful part of said landings; and the said Town has also sold a lot off a portion that was not needed for public use. But the said Town now entertain some doubts, as to the legality of some of the powers it has hitherto exercised respecting said landings, they therefore respectfully ask your Honorable bodies for such legislation as will give said Town full and complete jurisdiction over those within her limits, with power to lease for a term not exceeding five years, such portions of them as are now covered with buildings, which are partly on said landings, and partly on private lands, to individuals owning the same (provided they are not needed for public use); and that all sales, transfers, and contracts, hitherto entered into by the Town with individuals relative to said landings, may be confirmed and made legal to the parties, and for such further legislation upon the subject as may be deemed necessary or expedient--and as in duty bound will ever pray.

Westport July 7th, 1848

Nathan C. Brownell  
Christopher A. Church