

The West End Museum

150 STANIFORD STREET, SUITE 7, BOSTON, MA 02114

New Exhibit Sheds Light on Shadowed West End Prison *Reveals History of Leverett Street Jail*

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Boston, MA—All but forgotten in the narratives of Boston and the West End, the Leverett Street Jail has an important story that merits examination and remembrance. From February 17 through April 18, a new exhibit in the Members Gallery of [The West End Museum](#)—*Walls of Stone: The Leverett Street Jail*—reveals a notable and controversial history. The show reception takes place on Saturday, February 21 from 4 to 6 p.m., when attendees can tour the exhibit and enjoy light refreshments. The exhibit and reception are free and open to the public. (*Media note: Downloadable show-related images appear [here](#).)*

“The Leverett Street Jail was the epicenter of some of the most contentious social and legal issues of the day,” said Duane Lucia, West End Museum Board President and Curator. “Sadly, its history has been eclipsed by the Charles Street Jail and the loss of Leverett Street to urban renewal.”

Walls of Stone: The Leverett Street Jail explores the institution’s connections to such hotbed issues as capital punishment, slavery and abolitionism, blasphemy, and women’s rights. The Jail was infamous for overcrowding and intermingling inmates with no regard for severity of crime. Seven of 10 women incarcerated there were innocent, arrested purely on the word of others for such offenses as speaking out about politics. Among the institution’s most well-known inmates are:

- Dr. John Webster, who was ultimately convicted and hanged for the notorious 1849 murder of George Parkman
- William Lloyd Garrison, abolitionist leader, suffragist and social reformer who was held temporarily for his own protection against an angry mob
- Don Pedro Gibert, an early 19th century pirate who held the distinction of being the last pirate executed in Boston
- Abner Kneeland, who preached birth control, women’s property rights and interracial marriage and was the last person in the U.S. convicted of blasphemy

The Leverett Street Jail (1822-1851) was replaced by the Charles Street Jail (1851-1990; now The Liberty Hotel), which was later replaced by the Nashua Street Jail (1990-present).

Walls of Stone: The Leverett Street Jail is free and open to the public during regular Museum hours.

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About the West End Museum:

The West End Museum is dedicated to the collection, preservation and interpretation of the history and culture of the West End neighborhood. The Museum’s permanent exhibit, “The Last Tenement,” highlights the immigrant history of the neighborhood through its decimation under Urban Renewal in 1959; two additional galleries feature rotating exhibits. The Museum is located near North Station at 150 Staniford St. Suite 7. Hours: Tuesday - Friday 12:00pm - 5:00pm; Saturday 11:00am - 4:00pm. Admission is free.

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