

ROWAYTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



EXHIBIT HOURS
by appointment

Seaside Delights
Gift Shop

HOURS

Wednesday - Saturday
11 - 3
and by appointment

177 ROWAYTON AVENUE, ROWAYTON, CT 06853

FALL 2020

Gardens by Design: Pinkney Perfection

Pamela Proctor has been a dedicated steward of the Pinkney Memorial Garden for many years, transforming it into one of the most beautiful locations in Connecticut. This year, she and landscape designer Mike Mushak have worked their magic on the surrounding and exterior landscape of the Raymond Boathouse and the areas around the Memorial Garden. Enormous thanks to Pamela and Mike for their extraordinary donations of design, energy, materials, and time to create a beautiful inviting new entrance to the Boathouse.

Pamela Proctor

Pamela descends from a long line of distinguished artists, designers, and gardeners.

Growing up in New Jersey in a family of four children, Pamela and her siblings were employed by their parents and grandparents in the nurturing and maintenance of their gardens. Her mother, a member of the Garden Club of America, had her garden entered in the Smithsonian American Garden Archives. So, garden design and nurturing are in Pamela's DNA, and a passion for landscape and nature has imbued her life.

While working in New York City as a product designer, Pamela discovered Rowayton and moved here in 1988. The charming 80-year old house she lives in has a low-key chic style filled with books on her botanical interests. But it is her spectacular garden that is her pride and joy. Pamela has created ingenious designs of rock, plants, water and movement all framed and enhanced by a significant collection of coniferous trees and shrubs.

Pamela has also been a board member and enthusiastic volunteer



It's safe to say the past seven months have been unique and unsettling. The RHS had to postpone the grand opening of the Raymond Boathouse and our newest exhibit *What the Heck is This?* as well as our popular chili cook-off and Holiday Bazaar fundraisers due to the pandemic. Despite those disappointments, we have been hard at work behind the scenes and continue to bring virtual content and events to our community. As we move into winter, our work will continue, but without the fundraisers that we count on to run the museums, **we need your support now more than ever.**

We are so grateful for the generous financial support we have already received from the Sixth Taxing District, the Rowayton Civic Association, Fairfield County Bank, Laurel Bank, an anonymous benefactor, the State of Connecticut, and residents.

Your continued support ensures that we can enrich our community with interesting and relevant programming and events. Become a member and help preserve our shared history. We look forward to welcoming you back to the campus in 2021.

THE ROWAYTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

for the Rowayton Arts Center, created and maintained their website for the first 10 years, and redesigned the front landscape to the building in 2003, creating a warm and inviting setting.

Pamela says her sense of design leads her to look at landscape and its formations, and like many of us, some of her best ideas are formed standing at her kitchen sink and looking out the window.

In Rowayton, Pamela designs, gardens, and maintains the Rowayton Arts Center, the Memorial Garden at Pinkney Park, the Frank Raymond Boathouse, and the Potting Shed property



including the Ice House and Fairy Garden up at the Community Center.

“Gardening and being outside in nature gives me purpose” Pamela says. Rowayton is all the better for her talents and commitment to our community.

Mike Mushak

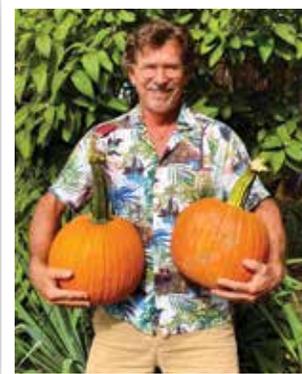
Mike Mushak, the founder and design director of Tulip Tree Site Design, Inc., has over 30 years of experience in the field of landscape architecture. He graduated from Rutgers University with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and is a licensed landscape architect in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. His portfolio has included work on a variety of projects, including public parks, museums, urban planning, corporate buildings, neighborhood improvements, and a wide range of residential designs across the country.

Over the last two decades, Mike has focused primarily on serving residential clients in the Northeast and has completed over 800 projects. He has particularly enjoyed developing strong and long-lasting relationships with many of his clients, some for over 20 years, based on a professional ethic of maintaining consistently high quality and value.

Teaming up with Pamela this year to landscape the Rowayton Historical Society Boathouse has been a rewarding experience for Mike. He has donated countless hours to

landscaping and garden design in many public spaces in Norwalk. Like Pamela, Mike and his partner David Westmoreland and Tulip Tree Site Design derive personal and civic satisfaction in giving their talents to beautify our community.

“One of our greatest pleasures with our landscape design business is when we actually don’t make a profit, but when we donate our time and skills to making Norwalk’s public spaces better for all to enjoy. Over the last 20 years we’ve donated improvements to Mathews Park, Mill Hill Historic Park, the City Hall campus around the Norwalk Historical Society Museum, Calf Pasture Beach, various street corners and “pocket” parks on Cedar Street and along MLK Boulevard in South Norwalk, and many city-owned historic cemeteries.



“Over the past year we enjoyed helping the awesome Rowayton Historical Society improve their campus in Pinkney Park, collaborating with the hard-working and dedicated Pamela Proctor of Rowayton Gardeners to design and install a maritime-themed garden around the new Frank E. Raymond Marine Collection in the renovated 1860 Barclay Boathouse.

“We also worked on the surroundings of the 1820 Seeley-Dibble-Pinkney House, the gift shop Seaside Delights, and most recently worked with Pamela to remove a jungle of poison ivy and invasive plants to create a new shaded seating area under the ancient old cedar by the sea wall. Five minutes after we finished that last project, folks were enjoying sitting on the big rock we turned into a bench. Success!”



Updates on the new Raymond Boathouse Maritime Museum



Although the Pinkney museum has been closed during the pandemic, we've been working behind the scenes, completing the renovation of the Boathouse as well as designing the exhibit space. We were thrilled at the completion of a new landscaping plan around the Boathouse, designed and implemented as a donation by Mike Mushak of Tulip Tree Site Design and Pamela Proctor. Theirs is an extraordinary gift, one for which we will be eternally grateful.

As part of the RHS's ongoing commitment to present Norwalk's history, the newly renovated Raymond Boathouse at Pinkney Park will highlight the stories of the people and places that have made the maritime history of Norwalk unique. But we need your help. We are grateful to our members for their financial support and hope you will join us in the effort to bring the history of our fisherman, mariners, Native people, and ecology to the City of Norwalk.

Please consider a membership to the RHS or a donation towards the Raymond Boathouse. This newsletter is the only solicitation you will receive from the RHS, and we need our community's support.

2021 EXHIBIT

What the Heck is THIS?



This is a question that the volunteers at the Pinkney House frequently ask as they photograph and document items in the Rowayton Historical Society collection. For the most part these mysterious objects were used every day in local homes and businesses. Over time, changes in technology and fashion have rendered them obsolete—and often unrecognizable. We have chosen some of the most intriguing to include in our “What the Heck Is This?” exhibit. We will provide tantalizing clues to aid visitors in identifying these treasures from the past and prizes to those who succeed in identifying them. A visit to this show will make a great outing for young and old alike.

The exhibit will open in 2021, as soon as it is safe to do so. Keep an eye on rowaytonhistoricalsociety.org for updates. In the meantime, we'd love it if you could help us figure out what the heck the item in this photo is. Send your response to info@rowaytonhistoricalsociety.org.



FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES



A *Norwalk Hour* article on

Dr. Wadsworth's Sanitarium

Meadow Street, South Norwalk

Eliminate the black and white "Building 7" sign and the iron fire escapes flanking each side of the majestic four-story stone structure and what remains is the fortress-like building with the red slate roof looking very much the same as it did in 1904 when it opened as a haven for the treatment of people with alcoholism, drug addiction and a host of "nervous conditions."

Known as **Dr. Wadsworth's Sanitarium** and situated high on a hill as the present-day centerpiece building and community center at Monterey Village Apartments, 133 Monterey Place, it appears to retain a sense of mystery, not only for its incongruity in the midst of multiple brick apartment buildings but also for the smattering of available records that exist about Dr. Alvin DeWitt Wadsworth (1876 – 1941) and the facility. Dr. Wadsworth and his family lived in the Sanitarium and the family would take the elevator down from the apartment, walk thru the tunnel and eat in the cafeteria with the patients. Dr. Wadsworth also invited school groups to picnic on the Sanitarium's grounds.

"I've never seen a written history about the Sanitarium," said Norwalk historian Ralph Bloom. "There are bits and pieces on the Internet, and the City has some building records."

A 1908 *World Almanac and Encyclopedia* advertisement offers the following clues to the services offered there:

"Dr. Wadsworth's Sanitarium, South Norwalk, Ct. For the care and treatment of select cases of the various nervous and mental diseases, such as Neurasthenia, Hysteria, Chorea, Epilepsy, Paralysis, Alcoholic and Drug Addictions. Delightfully located on extensive private grounds

overlooking Long Island Sound. Alvin D. Wadsworth, M.D. Telephone 210."

"I think much of the reason that there are not a lot of records are because of privacy issues for the patients there," said Paul Kerouac, historian at Norwalk Public Library History Room.

Touting "Modern treatment" the facility offered such up-scale amenities for the time as: "Electricity in all forms. Electric light and dry hot air baths. Individual, prescribing, trained nurses and skilled attendants in an unsurpassed location with country and sea views."

"There are fabulous views of the Sound from there. I can remember as a child living on Woodward Avenue and cutting through that property past the building," Bloom said. "It's amazing that this building is still standing but that's a testament to how well it was built."

According to a Connecticut Historical Commission report prepared by Bloom in 1978, the building has "Spectacular views of the harbor, the Sound and Long Island are to be seen from the upper floors.... Historical or architectural importance: It was built for Dr. Alvin DeWitt Wadsworth as an exclusive rest home with lawns and terraces."

The exclusivity of the wealthy patients, many of whom came from New York City to enjoy the relaxing grounds and views of the Sound, is illustrated by the experience of one well-known patient.

"One of the most famous patients who stayed there was Allyn King, a Ziegfeld showgirl who ruined her health by taking reducing pills to keep her contractual obligation not to gain weight," according to *Images of America: Norwalk*, a pictorial history of the city by Lisa Wilson Grant. "She disappeared from the sanitarium after being there for almost two years to stay with her aunt in Greenwich Village. There in 1938, she committed suicide, leaping from a fifth-story window to the courtyard below."

"What was interesting is that when I ran across references in the United States census to the sanitarium patients, they were called inmates," Kerouac said.

A June 23, 1907 *Washington Times* wedding announcement for one such wealthy "inmate" reported the following:

"Harry Cassell Orrendorff, heir to the millions of the late T.C. Orrendorff, a cartridge belt manufacturer of Worcester, Mass. and who is an inmate of Dr. Alvin T. Wadsworth's Moss



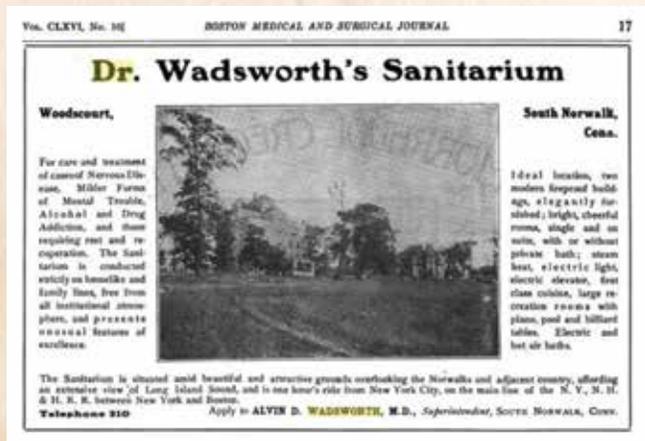
Hill Sanitarium was secretly married to Miss Mary Fleming Nash...Mr. Orrendorff has been a patient at the sanitarium for a year and a half but he is permitted to pass a great deal of time with his bride....

“Daily they spin about the town and the country roads, but rarely get beyond the boundaries of the Norwalks, one of the conditions under which Mr. Orrendorff gets so much liberty being that he shall not go far from the sanitarium....

“When Mr. Orrendorff was sent to the sanitarium by his mother, whose home is in Washington but who is well known socially in New York, Boston, and Worcester, he was a nervous wreck. He is now much improved and seems satisfied to remain in the sanitarium when he is not with his bride, and to comply to all the rules of the institution.”

Sometimes referred to as “Woods Court” in advertisements, the Norwalk City Directory of 1904 lists, “Wadsworth, Alvin DeWitt, physician and prop. “Moss Hill Villa” sanitarium off S. Main c Grove, S.N., and as late as 1941 the Norwalk City Directory makes reference to Dr. Wadsworth’s Sanitarium. The 1904 *Journal of the American Institute of Homeopathy* indicated that the facility had 30 beds and treated “alcohol and drug patients, patients with nervous conditions, and mild mental patients.” The estimated value of the property at the time was \$100,000.

Over the years, Wadsworth amassed a substantial amount of property in Norwalk and in April of 1935, he sold 44.5 acres of land extending from Main Avenue to Field Street for what is now the Merritt Parkway. In June of 1953, Wadsworth’s heirs sold 300 acres of land north of the Merritt Parkway, bounded by West Rocks Road, Bayne Street, East Rocks Road, and Grumman Avenue to builders George Bossert and Raymond Wennick for \$147,000¹.



¹Lake, Leslie; Norwalk *Hour*, August 2, 2014.

New Additions to the RHS Collection



Roton Point medal



Thomas School luncheon plate



Roton Point photograph



Postcards of the Norwalk trolley



A series of prints by Claude Venon



Photograph of Suffragette Helena Hill Weed



Jim Flora album cover

THE Place to Shop to Find the Perfect Gift!

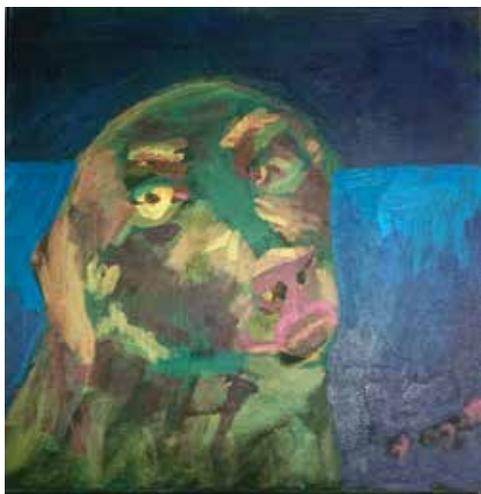
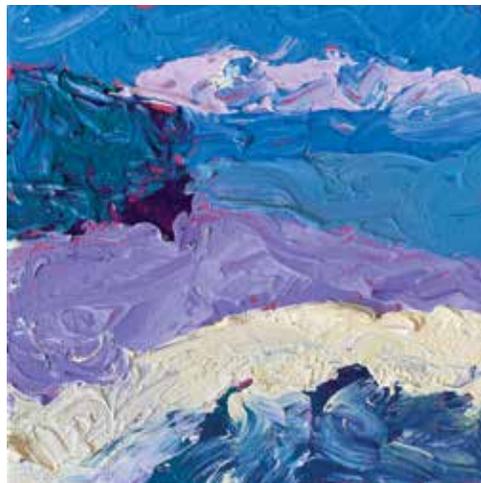
The RHS Gift Shop

Looking for something new and different to give as a hostess or birthday present? Stop by your award-winning gift shop in Pinkney Park, *Seaside Delights*, filled with fun and creative gift ideas, Rowayton-wear, fisherman’s finds, and plenty of new items perfect for the holidays... The shop is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 until 3 pm through the holiday season. You can also order by email at seasidedelights@gmail.com and pick up your items at the store.



HIGHLIGHTS *of* 2020

We reached out to the community to find out what kinds of creative projects they worked on during the pandemic. The outpouring of creativity has been heartwarming, a reminder of the talent among us and of the positivity and beauty that can come out of being home full time.

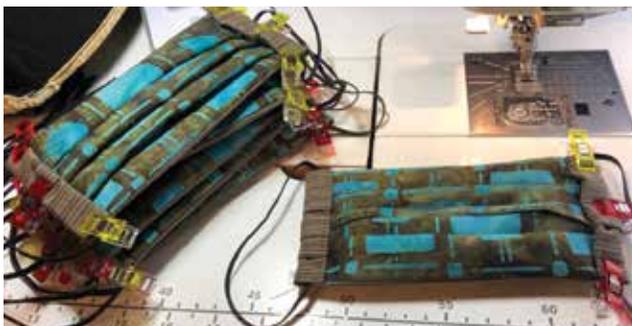
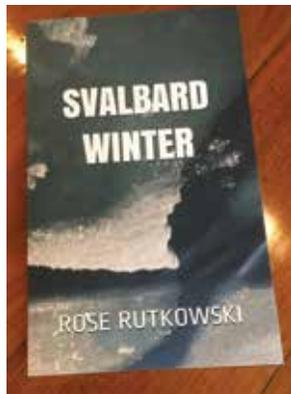
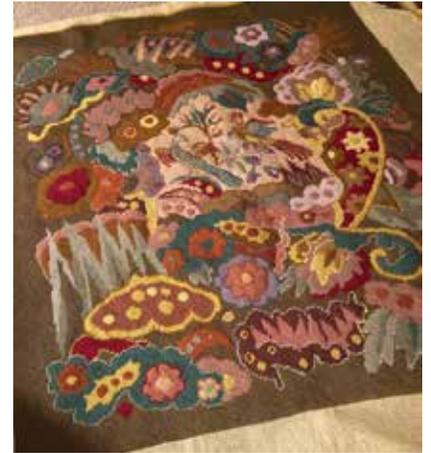


Rowayton resident Penny Havard shared her reflections of the pandemic with us:

"During the epidemic of the Spanish Flu 1918-1919, my maternal grandparents, Harry and Catherine Scofield, lived on Highland Avenue with their five young daughters. My grandfather tended a large vegetable garden and a flock of chickens. My grandmother kept the house and cooked all the meals with the help of her daughters. All the girls could sew and do needlework from a young age. There were no idle hands. They were a hard working industrious family. They all survived because most importantly they had each other.

When this epidemic started, I realized that I was going to need things to keep me very focused. Cleaning the house and doing laundry just weren't enough. I thought about my grandmother and how she would have handled things. My indoor garden brought color and cheer on gray days. I started a large 5+ foot-long winter scarf in a style of knitting I was not familiar with. Two months later it is finished, and I am tackling mittens to match. I walk twice a day and always have my camera on the ready to record birds and flowers to attach to the many emails I am sending each week. Then there is the kitchen. My grandmother was a fantastic cook and memories of time spent with her cooking have inspired me to make jam, bake bread and recently, scones. Sounds like I don't have a moment to spare but the days are long and most of all I miss my family: the busy-ness, the closeness, the comfort and support.

Although my grandparents and their children were all prolific correspondents, they left no record of their life during the period of the Spanish Flu. Today there will be many records both written and visual to which I add this humble account."



News from
The Pinkney
Memorial Garden

The garden continues to thrive, much in part due to our volunteer gardener extraordinaire Pamela Proctor who spends part of everyday tending to it. It was conceived of in 1996 and has been enjoyed by hundreds of people every year since, cherished as a beautiful, tranquil escape from the busy world. The RHS manages the garden and pays for its upkeep, and Rowayton Gardeners now tend to it with Pamela at the helm. We are so grateful for all the help these wonderful gardeners provide. **Please consider a gift to the garden in memory of your loved ones.**



IN MEMORIAM
FRANK XAVIER FAY
(1931-2020)



If you wanted to know anything about Rowayton, Frank Fay was your man.

An award-winning reporter and columnist at *The Norwalk Hour* for almost a half-century, Frank died peacefully at home in May after a long battle with cancer. The Rowayton native was known to his friends as Frank and to his loyal readers by his byline, Francis X. Fay.

Frank was the oldest of four sons of Margaret and Francis X. Fay, attended Norwalk High School and graduated from Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, N.H., where he played basketball and football. He attended Yale University, before serving in the U.S. Army, after which he attended Columbia University. A fine tenor, he sang in the glee clubs at both schools.

In 1961, Frank applied for a position at *The Norwalk Hour*, as it was then called. "He told them he could type. He couldn't," his brother Tom said. "But he sure could write and developed into a solid and accurate reporter. Whether out in the field or working the phones in the newsroom, he was a dogged and thorough reporter and a probing interviewer," said former *Hour* reporter Bill Dunn. "With facts and quotes in his notepad, Frank attacked the keyboard, manual typewriters in the early days, then IBM Selectrics and then computers, tapping out his stories with surprising speed, given he was only using his two index fingers."

His stories were well-crafted, engaging and informative and complete with relevant facts and compelling, revealing quotes. Over his long career, Frank covered most every beat, including city hall, police, sports. And for decades he was *The Hour's* education writer.

"Frank, who could have gone to one of the New York dailies, decided to stay at *The Hour*, covering his hometown, in time becoming its senior reporter. He was well-liked, revered and beloved. He was a mentor to many younger reporters who sought his advice and help," Dunn said.

Frank was mentioned in a book by Andy Rooney, the late columnist and "60 Minutes" commentator who also lived in Rowayton. "Frank is the star reporter for *The Hour* and a Norwalk treasure because he knows everything about everyone," wrote Rooney, who died in 2011. "I can hardly wait to die to see his obit on me."

Frank spent the last dozen years of his career writing a popular column, *The Way We Were*, in which he recalled bygone Norwalk. Dunn said Frank retired from *The Hour* in the spring of 2016.

Frank is survived by his brothers Thomas, of Manhattan Beach, California, T. Joseph, of East Hartford, and Gerard, of Ellicott City, Maryland, and step-daughter, June Blake. Fay was predeceased by his wife Valle Blake who founded the Norwalk Preservation Trust, worked to preserve Lockwood-Mathews Museum and was active in the redevelopment of the South Norwalk seaport.





**THE 10TH ANNUAL
ROWAYTON CHILI COOK-OFF
UNFORTUNATELY HAD TO BE
POSTPONED UNTIL 2021
DUE TO THE PANDEMIC.**

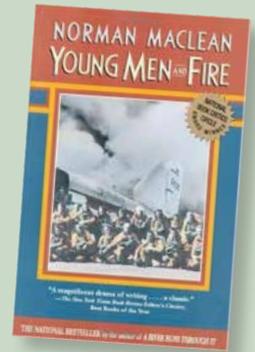
SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

The Rowayton History Book Club

The History Book Club, co-sponsored by the Historical Society and Rowayton Library, has met bi-monthly for the past three years but is on hiatus until it's safe to gather again.

We look forward to seeing you all whenever that is.

Copies of the books are available at Rowayton Library.



A present for that Rowayton person on your list:



Although the Library has been Rowayton's cultural hub for more than 110 years, its history has never been put down on paper in any great detail until now—complete with vintage photos, fun anecdotes, and plenty of local history.

The book along with *Historic Rowayton*, an illustrated history of Rowayton's historic homes and sites and *Rowayton on the half-shell*, is available for sale at Seaside Delights Gift Shop in Pinkney Park as well as at Rowayton Library.

Newly Plaqued Historic Homes

Over the past year, the RHS has issued two historic plaques to the following houses and have several others in process which have been delayed by the pandemic.

ON ROWAYTON AVENUE:

The Charles and Mary Sprague House,
c.1921

The Oliver and Almyra Cook House,
c.1900

If you think your house may qualify for a plaque, and you would like more information, please email us at info@rowaytonhistoricalsociety.org.

Farrell model donated to the RHS; now on display at its original home

The Historical Society received an extraordinary gift from Bell Island resident Grace Sartor: her treasured model of *Glory of the Seas*, which originally belonged to James and Katherine Farrell, her aunt and uncle. The exquisite model was built for the Farrells, a copy of their schooner, designed by Donald McKay and most likely built in his yard in Boston. The model will be on long-term loan to the Sixth Taxing District and on display in the James and Katherine Farrell conference room in the Community Center, the former Farrell carriage house where it most likely was first on display. We are so grateful for this very generous gift, one which will be enjoyed by generations to come.



George Middleton, the Farrell's great nephew, and Ed Carlson admiring the model

Norwalk's Remarkable Hill Sisters

And the Struggle for Equality:
*Two new markers in Norwalk
to honor local Suffragettes*



The Rowayton Historical Society, along with the Norwalk Preservation Trust, the Norwalk Historical Society, and Lockwood-Mathews Museum, is working with the City of Norwalk to install two plaques honoring the remarkable Norwalk women who fought tirelessly for the woman's right to vote during this, the centennial year.

The first will be a plaque at the site of their childhood home on West Avenue of the Hill sisters Clara, Helena, and Elsie who were leaders in the Connecticut Suffrage Movement. The sisters crisscrossed the country to make their opinions known. Clara was the mainstay in Connecticut, traveling all over the state to garner support for Suffrage.

The women were the daughters of Connecticut CONGRESSMAN EBENEZER HILL who represented his district, including Norwalk, for 22 years. Congressman Hill had long been a proponent of women's rights and in 1912 was the first Congressman in Connecticut to speak out for them.

✍️ ELSIE, who graduated from Vassar in 1906, said in an interview, “I was a Congressman's daughter and was very proper, but they put us in jail just for asking for the right to vote. I was given 15 days in jail—five for climbing on a public monument. We went on a hunger strike in jail.” The Suffragettes scored their victory in 1920 when the Constitution was amended to give women the vote, and the next year Elsie Hill became national chairman of the Women's Party, a group that had fought for the amendment.



✍️ HELENA was also a graduate of Vassar College and the Montana School of Mines—one of the first women geologists—and a vice-president of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). She was a prominent member of the



Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage and the NWP. Helena was one of the first picketers arrested on July 4, 1917 in Washington and served three days in District Jail. She was sentenced to 15 days in jail for attending a protest in Lafayette Square in 1918 and 24 hours in jail for applauding in court in February of 1919¹. In 1927, Helena ran unsuccessfully for Mayor of Norwalk.

✎ CLARA founded the Norwalk Equal Franchise League in 1912 and may have been its first president. The group would meet at the Baird School in Norwalk, at the South Norwalk public libraries, and at the Clifford Hotel until its headquarters opened on Washington Street in 1913.

In 1912 and 1913, Clara joined Norwalk's Alyse Gregory on Pierson's Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association "advance guard" team to work the factories and mills. The pair from Norwalk were considered the "linguists of the group" and gave empowering speeches to crowds of immigrant factory laborers—to both French Canadian and Italian workers—in their own languages in order to explain to them the meaning of the Votes for Women movement.

The plaque is sponsored by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation which is supporting a national Women's Suffrage marker program in collaboration with the **National Votes for Women Trail** (NVWT), a committee of the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites (NCWHS). This series commemorates the people, places and things instrumental to women gaining the right to vote in the United States in 1920 with the certification of the 19th Amendment. We are thrilled that the Foundation selected the Hill sisters to be among those honored.

The second plaque is planned to be installed in front of 17 Washington Street, which was the site of the Norwalk Equal Franchise League's headquarters and will read as follows:

On this site, the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association's Norwalk Equal Franchise League opened its new headquarters on May 12, 1913. The League was established by Norwalk's three Hill sisters, Helena, Clara and Elsie, and Margaret Robinson Brendlinger on May 5, 1911. Until the headquarters were opened,

the group met at Norwalk's Baird School (53 West Avenue), at the Clifford Hotel (South Main Street at Elizabeth Street), and at the South Norwalk public libraries. Rallies were also held at the Palace Theatre at 29 North Main Street.



Campaign poster for Helena Hill Weed's mayoral race



Elsie Hill in jail



Elsie Hill

¹ *The Bridgeport Post*; June 1, 1958, p. 33 History Records Suffragists' Battles as Often Stormy

RHS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wendell Livingston,
President

Lesley Korzennik,
Vice President & Curator

Ellen Duggins

Donna Gauthier

Gardner Gray

Joanne Gray

Deborah Hastings

Ed Hynes

Isabelle Hunter

Dana Laird

Lynne Pratt

Woody Woodworth

RHS ADVISORY BOARD

Cherie Burton

Francine Hubbell Duckworth

Krissy Guttroff

Barry Minnerly

Blaikie Hines

Brian Kammerer

William Korzennik

Tom Livingston

Page and Peter Morrison

Julie Murphy

Brenda and Rick Pank

Jack Raymond

Marty Roth

Rowayton Historical Society

P.O. Box 106 177 Rowayton Avenue

Rowayton, CT 06853

Presort
Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Norwalk, CT
Permit No. 232



Pinkney House by Kassie Foss

Unfortunately, our popular Holiday Train Show and Holiday Bazaar will not be held this year due to the pandemic, but we look forward to welcoming you back in 2021.

AMAZON SHOPPERS: When you order online, make RHS your Smile partner, and Amazon will donate a small percentage of every sale to the museum. Simply enter the Amazon website via www.smile.amazon.com and make the RHS your recipient. Quick and easy, and every little bit helps.

THANK YOU!