

ROWAYTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



EXHIBIT HOURS
Tuesdays 9:30 - 3
Fridays 1 - 4
(through Thanksgiving)
1st Sunday of the month
1 - 4 pm
and by appointment

half shell HOURS
Monday - Friday 11 - 3

177 ROWAYTON AVENUE, ROWAYTON, CT 06853

FALL 2012

NEW ADDITIONS *to the RHS Collection*

Native Arrowhead Found in Rowayton

John Zartorsky and his wife were strolling along the beach in Bell Island this spring when John noticed a glimmer emanating from the sand. "It just shone right out, it was so different from the rest of the rocks on the beach." Indeed, according to Ernest A. Wiegand, Archeology Program Coordinator for Norwalk Community College, John had discovered a projectile point from the late Archaic period.



This type of arrowhead has been found in radiocarbon-dated contexts ranging in age from about 2500-1700 BC. The tip is missing and appears to have been broken on impact while used in hunting. Points with broken tips were often brought back to camp and then discarded.

The point is made of dark black chert, which is not native to the southwestern Connecticut area as bedrock but which may have been transported by glacial activity at the end of the Ice Age or acquired through trade.

It's a good thing Mr. Zartorsky found the arrowhead when he did—a few more decades in the intertidal zone, and the point would have look like any other water-worn pebble!

Andy Rooney's vintage Underwood typewriter

The family of journalist, television commentator, and long-time Rowayton resident Andy Rooney was kind enough to donate several items to RHS from his estate this year.

Among the objects received was an Underwood typewriter. Mr. Rooney had quite an extensive collection of antique typewriters, some quite unique. The typewriter shown here is a Number 5. Manufactured between 1900 and 1930, the Underwood Number 5 was the world's most popular typewriter. Millions were sold and manufactured at the factory



in Hartford, CT. Beyond the obvious utility of the machine, there is an undeniable sculptural esthetic to the fantastic workings of its mechanisms. Gone are the days of the typewriter! All hail this transformative invention!

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HIGHLIGHTS *of* 2012

Our current exhibit: Close to Home: Rowayton and the Civil War
February - November 2012

A commemoration of the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War highlighting Rowayton's and Norwalk's participation in the war and its aftermath, including an exhibition, a Civil War lecture series in partnership with Norwalk Historical Society and Rowayton Library, a memorial service and cemetery tour in Rowayton Union Cemetery, and a Union encampment in Pinkney Park in September.

The Civil War had a profound effect on American life. It ushered the transition from an 18th century rural, agrarian society to the 19th century industrial age. No other event is as central to what America became and no other war changed the lives of such a significant percentage of the population. Rowayton was no exception.

Come learn the fascinating stories about the more than 65 soldiers with connections to Rowayton while honoring the local men and women who served their country during one of the most traumatic events in our nation's history.

Rowayton's own Civil War Encampment

September 2012

Forty-one young recruits signed up as members of the "Five Mile River Guards" to protect the Pinkney Battery from Confederates on September 15th when the RHS hosted a Civil War encampment on the banks of the Five Mile River. Members of the 20th Connecticut regiment along with other Civil War re-enactors joined the fray as the soldiers marched, drilled, fired a potato cannon at a Confederate "iron clad" which sailed up the river and skirmished at the end of the event. Period music, art, food, a lecture by Civil War author Blaikie Hines, ice cream donated by Brendan's 101, and over 500 guests rounded out a fun-filled day of history.



I need this photo in high resolution



History in your own back yard

Rowayton School children visit the RHS

The sun finally broke through the clouds in June as the RHS welcomed Rowayton School students to Pinkney Park for a long-awaited field trip to tour the RHS campus. We customized their tour to accommodate the school curriculum...Colonial history in Norwalk for the 5th graders, Native American life for the 3rd graders. RHS board members and docents Page Morrison, Lynn Maginnis, and Suzy Aubrey brought history home as they shared stories of early Native American life, British ships storming the shores of Norwalk during the Revolution, Colonial cooking and bathing, and oysters the size of dinner plates which fed Indians and settlers alike. Highlights included seeing Revolutionary War cannon balls and Native American artifacts found locally. Plans are in the works for the trip to become an annual event.

The Pinkney Memorial Garden

Refurbished and replanted as a 19th Century garden

The Pinkney Memorial Garden was conceived of in the late 1990s and has been enjoyed by hundreds of people over the years, cherished as a beautiful, tranquil escape from the busy world.

By the fall of 2010, though, the garden had become completely overgrown, and work began to restore it. A committee chaired by Tia Sidey, Susan Baker, and Fiona Pritchard incorporated the salvageable plants into a new nineteenth century flower garden with plants available during that time period. The garden was replanted during the spring of 2011, and despite snow storms and hurricanes, continues to thrive.

Volunteers are always needed to help keep the garden looking its best. If you would like to join the team, or make a donation, please contact the RHS or Tia Sidey at tsidey@gmail.com.



Who makes the best chili around?

2nd Annual Rowayton Chili Cook Off was a tasty success.

On October 13th hordes of chili-lovers thronged to Pinkney Park for the RHS' 2nd Chili Cook-Off, where teams competed for the honor of first, second and third place in both judged and People's Choice competitions. All types of chili were allowed, and as people made their way from booth to booth, they enjoyed the music of Bill Nollman, Michael Mugrage and Neil Currie. It was a delicious day!

A new website and image for the RHS

The RHS has a whole new look! If you subscribe to our email updates you will have noticed this already. Emails are cleaner and easier to read, and we hope you love them as much as we do. They are also tied into our new website, which was completely redesigned with you in mind. It is now easier to look up information on Rowayton's history, and find out what the RHS is up to. If you're not on our email list but would like to be let us know at info@rowaytonhistoricalsociety.org, and if you haven't already, check out the new website at

www.rowaytonhistoricalsociety.org.

Cocktails on the Five Mile River

Friends of the RHS gathered on a balmy June evening on the Pinkney back lawn to raise funds to support the society's preservation of our local history. The newly refurbished 19th Century garden was in full bloom, the sky was crystal clear, and everyone's favorite Rowayton band MOJO serenaded the guests as they nibbled delicious hors d'oeuvres created by caterer Jamie Sydney. The money raised will be used to properly house and archive the RHS' growing collection of artifacts, documents, and photographs.



The RHS gift shop is now open every weekday

Looking for something new and different to give as a hostess or birthday present? Stop by the *half shell*, our gift shop in Pinkney Park, which now features *Seaside Delights*, filled with fun and creative gift ideas, Rowayton-wear, fisherman's finds, and plenty of new items perfect for the holidays...be sure to stop in! You can also order by email at seasidedelights@gmail.com and pick up your items at the store.



half shell hours:

monday - friday

11 - 3

through the holiday season

A glimpse at Rowayton's past: stories of days gone by

Reverend Henry Ebenezer Wing (1839 - 1925) — Rowayton Civil War Hero

by Wendell W. Livingston

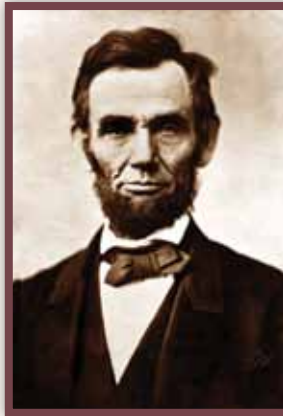
Reverend Henry Wing, Rowayton's Methodist minister for a number of years, had a very unique Civil War experience. After losing two fingers in battle, he was detailed to news reporting... and got the assignment of a lifetime: to deliver an important message to President Lincoln from General Ulysses S. Grant.

Private Henry E. Wing was mustered out of the Union army on crutches. The Connecticut native had been badly wounded at the Battle of Fredericksburg of December 1862. Wing, who had abandoned the study of law earlier in the year to fight in the Civil War, returned home to Litchfield to recuperate with his family. By 1864 he had sufficiently recovered and moved south to work as a Tribune war correspondent in Virginia. Conferring with his three fellow Tribune reporters after the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864, the mustachioed reporter volunteered to make his way back to Washington to file a story on the battle. "As the youngest, I knew the task naturally belonged to me." Wing also knew the trip would be difficult and dangerous.

Before he left Union headquarters, however, Wing had a private conference with General Ulysses S. Grant. After replying affirmatively to the Union commander's question about whether Wing intended to head for the capital, Grant "in a low tone" told Wing: "Well, if you should see the President, tell him from me that, whatever happens, there will be no turning back."

Wing's 70-mile trip back to the capital was a dangerous obstacle course in which he alternately pretended to be a Confederate messenger and a Union supporter.

Abandoning his horse, Wing reached Union Mills, Virginia, where a Union telegraph operator was stationed. Wing almost despaired of getting his dispatch on the telegraph wires, which were restricted to military use. He therefore sent a telegram to the War Department which was met with a reply demanding that Wing reveal what he knew of the recent battle. Wing sought to negotiate that information in exchange for an exclusive dispatch to the Tribune. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton responded with orders to arrest him. "Of course that settled it," wrote Wing later. "I would not have told him one little word to save my life." At that point, President Lincoln intervened with Wing over the telegraph and "accepted my terms without hesitation, only suggesting that my statement to my paper be so full as to disclose to the public the general situation." The President had a unique relationship with Civil War journalists. He often disdained the advice and criticism of newspaper editors even as he courted their Washington correspondents.



A Union Army train took Wing on the final leg of his travel to Washington. The dirty, disheveled reporter arrived at the White House after midnight. Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, former editor of the Hartford Evening Press, presented Wing to the rest of the cabinet and President Lincoln. After Wing had made his report and the Cabinet was dispersed, Wing asked to deliver a personal message to the President.

Wing's message—"General Grant told me to tell you, from him, that, whatever happens, there is to be no turning back"—greatly reassured the commander-in-chief in the light of the defeat of the Union army at the Battle of the Wilderness.

"Mr. Lincoln put his great, strong arms about me and carried away in the exuberance of his gladness, imprinted a kiss upon my forehead," Wing later wrote. The President asked what he could do for the journalist, who responded that he wanted to go back to get his horse Jesse. "I said I'd come back to get him, and I never lie to horses, Mr. President." Wing later wrote: "That early morning interview with Lincoln was the beginning of a strong friendship accorded to me, a mere boy, by that wonderful man."

The President provided Wing with a train and military escort to retrieve Jesse, who was, like Lincoln, a native of Kentucky. When Wing brought the horse to the White House for a party of journalists, Lincoln asked Wing if he could ride Jesse.

As Wing prepared to leave the grounds that day, Lincoln told him: "You will be coming to Washington sometimes and remember this, that when you do, I want you always to come and see me. It is an order. You are to tell me all you hear and see."

Wing, who went on to be a Methodist minister in Iowa and later Rowayton, kept his promises—to horses and to presidents.

When Reverend Wing returned from the war, he was appointed Minister of the Rowayton United Methodist Church. He married Zerviah "Vida" Nash on September 30th, 1863 in South Norwalk, and they lived with their two children Henrietta and Charles in the church parsonage at #7 Pennoyer Street. They had a second daughter Camilla who died in 1869 at the age of three months. The house is still standing, just north of the church. Following the death of Serviah, he married Mary Butler in 1914. After retirement from the ministry in Iowa, he came back to spend his last days in Rowayton with his second wife who served as the Librarian at Rowayton Library for 1928 until 1940. He lived to be 86 years old and is buried in Riverside Cemetery Norwalk, along his first wife Vida, their daughter Henrietta and various other extended family members.



One of a large collection of photographs, glass plates, and images donated by the Thomas family, descendants of Reverend William H. Thomas. In 1874 Reverend Thomas built a home for his family that is still standing, overlooking Wilson Cove. Among their many accomplishments, daughter Mable founded the Thomas school. The family continued to live on Wilson Cove until the 1970's when the property was sold to developers. This year we were delighted to receive several hundred photographs from the family, and glass plates from the early 1900's to the mid-1950's depicting family life in Rowayton and beautiful views of Wilson Cove.

A vintage gasoline pump from the Farrell estate on Highland Avenue, one of a number of items donated to the Historical Society by George Middleton, great grandson of James Farrell who owned a number of houses in Rowayton, including his magnificent estate Rockledge. The RHS will feature an exhibit on the Farrell estate in the spring of 2013 in conjunction with the Rowayton Gardeners, the Sixth Taxing District, and the Rowayton Library.



The RHS Historic Plaque Program

Rowayton has a long and rich history, and its houses are an integral part of that story. The purpose of the Historical Society's plaqued house program is to call attention to the historic character of Rowayton and give recognition to early buildings and to the people who built or resided in them. Over 150 houses in Rowayton have been "plaqued" or documented as having been built over 90 years ago. In addition, there have been a number of plaques presented for "non-houses" such as boathouses, old stores and barns.

Former NHL hockey player Ryan Shannon and his wife Jessica recently hung an historic plaque on their Rowayton home. "I loved that our "new" home was built in 1910 and had so many unique characteristics. Over several years, we renovated it while keeping as much of the original

charm as possible. During that first drive through Rowayton, I noticed the plaques on many of the homes and thought it was lovely that the town celebrated its history in that way.

When the final phase of the renovation was complete, I contacted the Rowayton Historical Society to inquire about getting a plaque. I was thrilled to learn that, as part of the plaque program, a history of the property is prepared as well."

To qualify for a plaque, a building must be documented as being built 90 years from the present and visually recognizable as an historic building. If you think your house may qualify and you would like more information, please call us at 203-831-0136 or email us at info@rowaytonhistoricalsociety.org.



RHS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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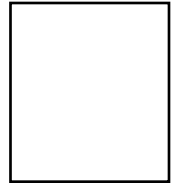
Brenda and Rick Pank

Jack Raymond

Rowayton Historical Society

177 Rowayton Avenue

Rowayton, CT 06853



Need RHS
non-profit indicia

Coming Attractions

RHS Holiday Open House

Sunday, December 2nd 3-6 pm

Including Brian Kammerer's amazing model trains, an exhibit of a vintage Christmas in Rowayton, and refreshments.



"Light Up Rowayton"

Sunday, December 2nd 5 pm

This year the RHS will do the honors of lighting the village for the holiday season at 5:30 pm sharp in Pinkney Park. The Brien McMahon Chamber Choir will perform in front of the Pinkney House at 5 pm.



2013

EXHIBITS

Flower Arrangements based Historical Objects

March 2013

Co-sponsored by the Rowayton Gardeners

The Farrells: Their Lives and Legacy in Rowayton

May 2013 - October 2013

LECTURES

Common Courage: *The Campaigns of a Revolutionary War Veteran* by Daniel D. Kinley **Sunday, February X 4 pm**

Rowayton Historical Society, 177 Rowayton Avenue, Rowayton.
\$5 admission. Free to RHS members.

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By Professor Ernie Weigand, Norwalk Community College
Sunday, January X, 4 pm

Rowayton Community Center, 33 Highland Avenue, Rowayton.
\$5 admission. Free to RHS members.