

Local genealogy - - Suggestions for patrons from our resources – in
approximate order of importance

“**Norwalk**” (1896) [R974.6 SEL] by Charles Selleck – focuses on the founding families of Norwalk and their descendants up to the date of publication. The “Blue” bound copy includes an index. Anecdotal in style, it does not claim to have a comprehensive list of descendants. The author had access to personal reminiscences, correspondence and Bible records that may not exist today.

“**History and Genealogy of the Families of Old Fairfield,**” or “**Families of Old Fairfield**” (1930) [R929.37469 HIS] – by Donald Lines Jacobus – Comprehensive and researched from original vital and probate records. He includes Norwalk families up to about 1700. Many colonial pioneer families migrated from town to town so the regional focus of this multi-volume work can be valuable for researchers.

“**Barbour index of Connecticut town vital records,**” [R929.3746 BAR, volumes for **Norwalk and adjacent towns in lower Fairfield County**] Births, marriage and deaths were extracted from town record books to about 1850. Norwalk first included areas now comprising all or part of New Canaan, Westport, Wilton and Darien. It must be noted that town vital records are not complete, especially during the Revolutionary War period and early 19th century. Also, for Norwalk, most early church records until about 1807 were lost.

“**Ricker compilation of Vital Records of Early Connecticut**” [R929.3746 RIC] a CD comprising the Barbour and other vital records for the entire state, up to about 1850, alphabetized in a single index – searchable and browsable, for use on LHC or Reference Center PCs. Has the limitation of Barbour records, as noted above.

“**Hall’s Norwalk Records**” or, “**Ancient historical records of Norwalk, Connecticut**” [R974.6 HAL], by Edwin Hall (1847). Transcribed town records include an indexed section of vital records arranged by family. As above, note that vital records are not complete.

Narrative histories of Norwalk and other portions of Fairfield County offer specific information and insights to the family historian:

“**History of Fairfield County**” [R974.69 WIL] by Lynn Wilson offers an overall history of the region up to the 1920s.

“**Norwalk after 250 years,**” [R974.69 NOR] offers much in historic, social and economic specifics to 1901, though without an index.

“**Romance of Norwalk**” [R974.6 DAN] by Elsie Danenberg is a detailed history up to 1929 written in a popular style, indexed.

“**Norwalk: Being a historical account of that Connecticut town**” [R974.693 RAY] by Deborah W. Ray and Gloria P. Stewart, 1979 is a professionally authored history brought up to the 1950s, with footnotes, bibliography and index.

A loose-leaf binder labeled “**Supplement to the Local History Collection,**” prepared by our staff, placed at the front of the Local History Collection includes:

- Bibliography and sources for Connecticut records
- Norwalk Museum holdings

CT marriages and deaths 1792-1837
Headstones of Silvermine Cemetery (New Canaan)
Deaths (1890-1896) and marriages (1890-1891) from Norwalk City directories
First Congregational Church – list of members 1807-1851
Some baptisms and marriages 1742-1746, Fairfield County Anglican churches

In adjacent binders:

- Articles relating to Norwalk **genealogies** copied from published journals
- Selections from **Sanborn Map** images of Norwalk and South Norwalk, 1896-1922.

Our **Local History Collection** includes histories of other area towns and individual family histories, most of which include descents for many of the early local families. Migration patterns from Norwalk in colonial towns frequently led north (Wilton, Ridgefield), west (New York State, Newark, NJ) and south (Long Island, NY)

For later Norwalk connections, we have the **Norwalk vital records** from 1848 through ca. 1904 on microfilm. These are microfilmed from originals at the city hall so for this period it is unnecessary examine the locally-held records. Guides to the coverage on each reel are included in the film cabinet drawers adjacent to the Information Desk.

We have microfilm of **Norwalk city directories** from 1882-1960. Directories from 1961-1992 are located in the LHC and in Closed Stacks. Directories from 1891-1896 and from 1924-1979 include death notices for adult residents.

We have the “**Hour**” **daily newspaper** on microfilm from 1895 to the present, with a few gaps where no copies have survived to be filmed. While a general index to the newspaper is available only between May 1983 and recent years - online via our web page - vital record extractions for Norwalk were published monthly in the newspaper from about 1903 until at least 1940. These notices can lead to a published obituary or a request to the town clerk for a death or marriage record. In Connecticut, birth records are restricted to direct descendants or genealogists for a period of 100 years from their creation. A single issue of the “Hour,” Aug. 7, 1951, prepared for the town’s 300th anniversary, has a wealth of historical articles. It is on microfilm and was photocopied as a “scrapbook” [974.69 NOR]. We also own a bound volume of the original newspaper but the paper is brittle so access to this should be restricted to persons who want to take digital photographs of articles.

We have “**Norwalk Cemeteries,**” [R929.5 CAR] a 1945 compilation of headstone inscriptions by Lester Card as well as “Hale Collection of Cemetery Headstones” (1934) on microfilm covering Norwalk. The latter is indexed and includes Catholic and Jewish cemeteries not copied by Card.

Two microfilm reels cover Mr. Card’s transcription of marriages in Norwalk to 1875 from newspaper notices and marriages and deaths from the *Norwalk Gazette* from 1810-1855 as well as a probate index covering 1648-1757 for Norwalk.

General genealogy

United States census records are available free online at HeritageQuest, via www.iconn.org (with a library card) from 1790 through 1930 (the 1890 schedules were destroyed). On this database, some years are indexed by head of household [1880 has an every-name index] but images of the entire censuses are fully browsable. The 1930 listings include only a few states. Also available at HeritageQuest are scanned and searchable texts of many traditional (out of copyright) genealogy and local history texts as well as an index to genealogy periodicals (PERSI). If a periodical article of interest cannot be located nearby or obtained via Interlibrary Loan, a copy can be obtained from Allen County Public Library of Indiana (for a fee), with links to the index website. Other offerings from iconn.org include both contemporary and historical newspaper articles. All iconn.org users can access the Historical Hartford Courant (1764-1922) and Norwalk residents can also access the Historical New York Times (1851-2003)

The library also has microfilmed images of the same censuses which cover Norwalk and all or part of Connecticut and Fairfield County, depending on the census year. Guides to the coverage of each reel are included in the film cabinet drawer. Print index volumes in Local History Collection [**R317.46 CON**] cover 1790-1870 censuses for Connecticut.

Online sources, such as <http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com> and Ancestral File and IGI at www.familysearch.org should be used with caution. If no source citations are given, it may be difficult to verify if data is accurate. The **Social Security Death Index**, <http://ssdi.rootsweb.com>, can be helpful in finding a death date and place for persons who have died since ca. 1963. The free search portion of www.usa-people-search.com lists names, ages and likely towns of residence for individuals. Further data is available for a fee, though no guarantee is made of its accuracy or relevance. www.pipl.com has a similar premise, linked to so-called "hidden web" data.

www.cyndislist.com consists of links to websites for almost any online genealogical source. Links can lead to information via surname, location, ethnic research or any topic.

An increasing number of scanned and indexed records can be found online at www.ancestry.com. This subscription site is not available at the Norwalk Public Library but the Ancestry Library Edition can be used at libraries which do subscribe, including Bridgeport, Danbury, Greenwich, Hamden, Monroe, New Canaan, Pequot, and the Connecticut State Library in Hartford. Personal subscriptions to the Ancestry databases are available by subscription, details on their website.

Our circulating collection has a number of books and some CDs on how to undertake a genealogical search, from beginning to advanced, from colonial to ethnic ancestries. The general call number area is 929.1 A catalog search under "genealogy" will list most of our titles.