



Norwalk Museum News

NORWALK HISTORICAL SOCIETY  HOLIDAY EDITION 2024  NORWALK, CONNECTICUT

Visit Our Museums



Mill Hill Historic Park

Tour historic 18th and 19th century buildings, the 1767 burying ground and a colonial herb garden, *Located at 2 East Wall Street, Norwalk.*



Norwalk Historical Society Museum

View exhibits, artwork, and artifacts showcasing Norwalk's history. The gift shop offers a distinctive array of merchandise. *Located at 141 East Avenue, Norwalk. Enter from the parking area off City Hall Drive.*

Visit our Website



- Info on hours and tickets
- Calendar of events
- News about our exhibits
- Research materials

www.norwalkhistoricalsociety.org



NORWALK *est. 1651*
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Justin Gruelle's 'Shoveling Snow'

Justin Gruelle was born into an artistic family. His father was the Hoosier group painter Richard Gruelle, and his older brother, John, was the creator of the Raggedy Ann characters. Gruelle worked for the WPA Federal Arts Project. Several of his WPA paintings may be viewed at City Hall and at the Norwalk Public Library. *Shoveling Snow* was painted in the 1950s and depicts Gruelle's residence on Yew Street in Norwalk.



Coming Soon:

Infamous Prisoners and Famous Pottery

Originally known as "the Lock-up," the Smith Street jail building located at the foot of Mill Hill Historic Park, is scheduled to open in 2026. Exhibits in the surviving first-floor jail cells will tell the story of both the Lock-up's jailers and their infamous prisoners. Original graffiti from the 1800s, written in pencil by some of the prisoners, is being meticulously preserved. Norwalk in the 19th century was a rapidly growing industrial town which included several pottery factories. The jail building was originally an outbuilding for the A. E. Smith & Sons Pottery Company. The second floor will showcase our extensive collection of Norwalk Pottery and tell about the lives of the people who worked in the factories. Items produced included water jugs used by sailors, doorknobs (that still survive in many older Norwalk homes), buttons, and vessels for preparing, serving, and storing food. These utilitarian items are highly collectable and valuable today.



From Stereoscopes to View-Masters

Everyone, at some point in time, has looked into a View-Master and marveled at a 3-D scene. What's the history behind this popular toy? At the



Norwalk Historical Society Museum, you can see examples of 19th century stereoscopes, the View-Master's "ancestors," and learn how they are related to the history of photography.

A stereoscope is a viewer that allows someone to look at a pair of stereo pictures and see them as a single three-dimensional image. Stereo pictures are left-eye and right-eye views—views at slightly different angles—of the same object or scene.

British scientist David Brewster invented a stereoscope and exhibited it in 1851 at the Great Exhibition in London. Queen Victoria became a big fan. In the United States, Oliver Wendell



Holmes (the father of the man who would become a Supreme Court Justice) invented an inexpensive stereoscopic viewer and photographers began producing stereoscope cards of famous people, majestic natural wonders, and faraway lands.

Soon companies in Europe and the United States offered thousands of stereograph "views" to the thousands of families that kept a stereoscope in the parlor for entertainment and education. During the Civil War, Mathew Brady, known as the father of photojournalism, exhibited stereo views of photographs taken at the Battle of Antietam.

The View-Master stereoscope premiered at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City. The View-Master differed from older stereoscopes by replacing stereograph cards with round cardboard reels each holding 7 small pairs of Kodachrome color film images. Another transformation occurred in the 1950s when View-Master partnered with Disney and began offering reels



featuring Disney characters and scenes from the newly-opened Disneyland theme park. In subsequent decades

3-D viewers would continue to find a place both on the toy shelf and in the classroom.

Visitors to the Norwalk Historical Society Museum can view stereocards through a modern 21st century stereoscope and learn about other early photographic techniques and devices.

