



# Norwalk Museum News

NORWALK HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUMMER 2024 NORWALK, CONNECTICUT

## Visit Our Museums



### Mill Hill Historic Park

Tour historic 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, a colonial herb garden, and the 1767 burying ground. 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](http://www.norwalkhistoricalsociety.org)



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## The Marquis de Lafayette in Norwalk!



Lafayette was a French nobleman who volunteered to fight in George Washington's Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. In 1824, he was invited back to the United States, where he visited Washington, D.C. and completed a "Grand Tour" of all 24 states of the union. In Connecticut, Lafayette visited 26 cities and towns. In Norwalk he was welcomed at a reception at the Norwalk Hotel. To mark this event, the Norwalk Historical Society is collaborating with the Connecticut Bicentennial Committee to present Lafayette in Norwalk. This program will include a reception at the Town House Museum at Mill Hill Historic Park, only a few steps from the site where

Lafayette was greeted in 1824. We hope you can join us on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM for refreshments, a viewing of our Lafayette in Norwalk exhibit, and a chance to meet the general himself! Go to our [website](#) to register for this free event.



## Sheldon's Horse, the 2nd Continental Light Dragoons

Sheldon's Horse, the 2nd Continental Light Dragoons, was commissioned by Congress under the command of Colonel Elisha Sheldon on December 12, 1776, at the direct recommendation of General George Washington. The 3rd Troop under Captain Josiah Stoddard operated in Fairfield and Westchester Counties and was supplied by Eliphalet Lockwood's trading company in Norwalk. When, in 1778, a trooper was arrested for looting and held in Norwalk's jail, Captain Stoddard retrieved his man at sword point. In 1978, the regiment was reestablished and participates in educational, civic, and ceremonial activities.



Photo credit: [www.dragoons.info](http://www.dragoons.info)

# “My family came to Norwalk in about 1905.”



Courtenay Austin remembers when there were trolley tracks running along East Avenue. Her grandfather was an architect and painter and the family lived in several neighborhoods through the years. Courtenay was born in 1932 in Norwalk during the Great Depression. As a child she remembers going to the old 4-room schoolhouse, riding her bike to Calf Pasture Beach to go clamming, selling Girl Scout cookies for \$0.25 a box, and swimming on the YMCA team. She also remembers shopping on old West Avenue at Hatches with the soda fountain and long line of stools, and going to the doctors' offices. “If I got my shots without squawking, I got an ice cream at Hatches.” Courtenay especially remembers Mansion Row on West Avenue across from Matthews Park.

On September 21, 1938, Norwalk was struck by a storm that the National Weather Service describes as “one of the most destructive and powerful hurricanes in recorded history.” Courtenay was only six years old, but she recalls the roar of the storm. “It was an incredible noise, and it lasted all night” with a 6-foot storm surge. At the time the family was living in Harborview, which was a colony of summer houses with only five families living there year-round. After the storm, she and her sister walked through the wrecked summer homes, examining the damage. Courtenay is never far from Norwalk history because the house she lives in was built in 1741, making it one of the oldest homes in the city. In the basement, there are charred timbers dating from the burning of Norwalk by the British during the Revolutionary War.



## Norwalk Collects: History Comes Alive at the Museum

What objects do people collect? Letters, photographs, pottery, paintings, furniture, toys... the list goes on and on. People often put together collections that reflect upon and record important memories and milestones. Sometimes these collections are given



to libraries and museums, allowing visitors to travel back into the past. The Norwalk Historical Society collects items that tell stories of the city over time.

One of our galleries at the Norwalk Historical Society Museum showcases items donated to four institutions: the Lockwood House Museum, the Norwalk Museum,

the Norwalk-Village Green Daughters of the American Revolution and the Norwalk Historical Society. Now these collections have been unified, and many fascinating items reflecting our city's history are on display. Visit our [website](#) for information on how to book a self-guided tour.

