

The Journey to the Norwalk History Room

By

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A few days ago while unpacking a box of donations for the Norwalk History Room I began thinking about how much the history room benefits from the generosity of others. So this time instead of writing about Norwalk notables who made history I have decided to write about notables from Norwalk and beyond whose donations help the Norwalk History Room carry out its mission. These unsung heroes by donating books, pamphlets, and other material help expand the history room collection.

Unpacking the box provided a sense of excitement as each item was revealed and checked against the library catalog. Some of the donations were new to our collection while other donations would bolster our collection by providing duplicate copies.

This prompted me to walk up and down the shelves of the Norwalk History Room to get a sense of the impact that donations have made to our collection even donations that preceded the establishment of the Norwalk History Room. But I soon discovered that bookplates, autographed copies, and names written on a flyleaf could not be used to prove definitively the source of a donation these indicators could shed light on original owners of books that have now found a home in our collection. For example, the history room collection has the three copies of *Rowayton on the Half Shell* by Frank E. Raymond. A bookplate on one copy states "Gift from the author Frank. E. Raymond." Another copy has an autographed inscription: "To the Friends of Lockwood House and especially to Ralph Bloom with sincere thanks. Compliments of Rowayton Historical Society Frank E. Raymond 7/9/90." A third copy had an individual's name inscribed on the flyleaf. If life is a journey, then this title alone proves that this book, and probably others in our collection, have led a full life from being written, published, printed, given as gifts or purchased by individuals, until eventually by a circuitous route, they reach their current destination in the Norwalk History Room.

The Norwalk History Room at the Norwalk Public Library welcomes any material that is reflective of life in Norwalk, Connecticut. This includes photographs, menus, brochures, books, diaries, letters, manuscripts, yearbooks, and other printed and visual material. If you ever wondered whether you would leave your mark on your times this is your chance to become part of history, part of the Norwalk History Room.