

WHAT'S IN A NAME OR HOW ALL ROADS LEAD TO NORWALK

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Having found an interesting letter from the Mayor of Norwalk online, only to learn that the letter was from the Mayor of Norwalk, Iowa, sent in motion an exploration of other places named Norwalk. The grand total, not including Connecticut, was seven states that had their own Norwalk: California, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. As a librarian in the Norwalk History Room I naturally gravitated towards finding the history of each Norwalk, or as I affectionately referred to the group as the Magnificent Seven. I began by compiling a list of eighteen links to websites that provided insights into the history of these seven places. Some websites also highlighted connections with Norwalk, Connecticut.

Norwalk, Ohio, was a phoenix rising out of the ashes of the burning of Norwalk, Connecticut by the British in 1779. Thirty-three years later “*Connecticut granted land from its western reserve in Ohio as compensation to those who lost property during the British raids.*”¹ Not surprisingly, according to “Norwalk, Ohio” on ohiohistorycentral.org “*Residents named the town after Norwalk, Connecticut.*”²

Norwalk, Iowa received its name because of one man, George W. Swan, who was responsible for having “*laid out the town and erected a hotel.*”³ He had a dual Norwalk connection in that he had been “*born in Norwalk, Connecticut and was associated with a newspaper in Norwalk, Ohio.*”⁴

The name for Norwalk, Wisconsin also originated with a single person, S. McGary, who hailed from Norwalk, Ohio. Not surprisingly, “*when the village was organized he named it Norwalk in honor of his native village back in Ohio.*”⁵ If the concept of degrees of separation applied to towns then Norwalk, Wisconsin is a case of two degrees of separation. Why two degrees of separation? Well, we all know where Norwalk, Ohio got its name.

Having began with the query of what's in a name, we conclude, one way or another that all roads lead to Norwalk: Norwalk, Connecticut.

¹ <https://www.norwalkoh.com/history-of-norwalk>

² https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Norwalk,_Ohio

³ https://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/community/about_norwalk

⁴ https://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/community/about_norwalk

⁵ <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS11224>