

The Stamford Historical Society Presents:

Digging Up Stamford:

An Archaeological History of Stamford, Connecticut, from 11,000 BP to the Present

On Sunday, September 16th at 2:00PM the latest exhibit at the Stamford Historical Society will open at Society headquarters, 1508 High Ridge Road. Titled "Digging Up Stamford: An Archaeological History of Stamford from 11,000 BP to the Present," the exhibit will feature material recovered from archaeological sites excavated within the bounds of Stamford. The exhibit will have both a prehistoric and an historic component. The goal of the exhibit is to show how much can be learned of the past through items of material culture or artifacts (any item made or used by humans) in conjunction with the study of written materials where they are available. In many cases no historic materials are available and the past must be reconstructed solely through archaeological evidence.

The hallway will be dedicated to a presentation of the Native American materials recovered in Stamford along the shore and from area rockshelters. Among the sites from which materials will be shown are: Cove Island, Rockrimmon Rockshelter, Darling Rockshelter, Bear Rock Rockshelter, Eastover Rockshelter, and Finches Corner. Each individual site will be explored in terms of its usage and occupations in an attempt to reconstruct prehistoric lifeways. The various prehistoric phases of occupation of the area are discussed and a lexicon of archaeological terms will form part of the exhibit. Most of the material in this part of the exhibit is made up of stone (lithic) artifacts although there are also some shell and ceramic pieces. The Society is indebted to Ernest Wiegand of Norwalk Community College for serving as Guest Curator and for making available to show much of this material. He was the principle investigator at many of the sites mentioned. The Society is also fortunate to have arranged loans of material from the Stamford Museum and Nature Center and the Bruce Museum for this part of the exhibit as well.

The Red Gallery will be dedicated to the historic period and will include material excavated from the Society's own Hoyt-Barnum House as well as from other sites including 235 Riverbank Road (the Clason House); Old Mill Road, Newman Mills, Fort Stamford and the Davenport School site (Scofield House). This material spans the 18th and 19th centuries. Whenever possible, materials from the Society's collections will be integrated into the exhibit so as to show what the pieces found in a dig would have looked like complete. For example, stoneware sherds will be accompanied by a complete stoneware vessel from the Society's collection. In this way the viewer can appreciate how much can be shown through fragmentary material. The historic portion of the exhibit will also examine households in terms of activities and socioeconomic indicators visible through the interpretation of the archaeological record. The presence of different groups such as women and children will also be shown archaeologically.

Our opening day will commence with a talk given by Guest Curator Ernest Wiegand of Norwalk Community College, who is the resident expert on the Native American periods of the region. He will present a discussion of many of the sites featured in the exhibit. The exhibit will remain open until 4:30 that afternoon. Thereafter the exhibit may be seen during Society hours Tuesday through Saturday 12 - 4PM. The exhibit will run through the spring.

The State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni will be the featured speaker at our Founders' Day Lecture on Sunday, October 21,, again at 2:00PM.