

## The Federal Art Project in New Haven: The Era, Art, and Legacy



As part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, federally sponsored work relief programs were created both to help out-of-work artists and to reinforce patriotic feelings toward city, state and country through the use of visual images.

This was especially important during the 1930s, an era of great economic and cultural upheaval. Using original documents, artwork and photographs, the New Haven Museum & Historical Society's exhibit explores New Haven's participation in the work relief program known as the Federal Art Project (1933-1943). Since most of the art produced under this program has long since disappeared, we are fortunate to have these superb examples to study and enjoy.

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### New Haven Museum & Historical Society

The New Haven Museum & Historical Society is committed to increasing knowledge and providing an understanding and appreciation of Greater New Haven history. Its programs, exhibitions and collections aim to stimulate discovery and interpretation of the past among a wide-ranging community of visitors, including families, students and scholars. The Society believes that an appreciation of the past will enable the public to make informed decisions and contributions to the future.

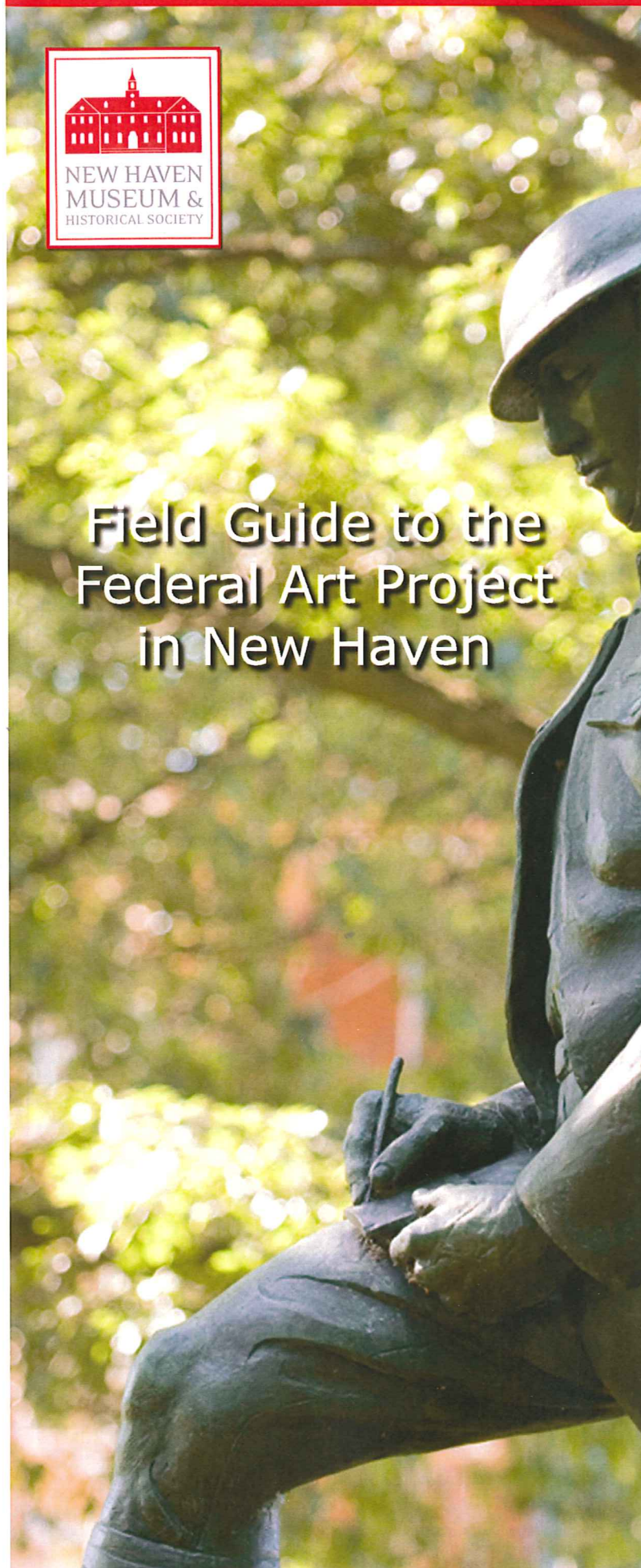
To learn more visit the exhibit **The Federal Art Project in New Haven: The Era, Art, and Legacy**  
November 30, 2006 to September 1, 2007  
114 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, CT 06510  
Hours: T-F 10-5, S 12-5  
203.562.4183 or [www.newhavenmuseum.org](http://www.newhavenmuseum.org)



*His Book*, A. Reid Winsey, Atwater Senior Center, mural, 1935. Worked into the boisterous scenes of knights in shining armor, fairytale characters, pirates and clowns, American symbols such as the waving flag and bald eagle energize the mural with patriotic zeal. The mural reads as something more than a young reader's world history lesson through literature when it is noticed that a knife is plunged into a world globe in the vicinity of Western Europe.



## Field Guide to the Federal Art Project in New Haven





# 1. DOWNTOWN



**New Haven Free Public Library**  
 133 Elm Street  
 Lunette: Main Lobby  
 Hours: M 12-8, T 10-6, W 10-6,  
 TH 10-8, F Closed, S 10-5,  
 Su Closed  
[www.cityofnewhaven.com/llibrary](http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/llibrary)

**The Personification of New Haven Receiving New Immigrants, Bancel LaFarge with the assistance of Thomas Guidone, Christopher McLaughlin and Louis Agostino, encaustic mural, 1935.** Painted in an Italian Renaissance style, the central female figure, the personification of the City of New Haven, welcomes with open arms an immigrant family walking in from the viewer's right. References to learning, via Old Brick Row at Yale University, appear to the viewer's left (note Handsome Dan, Yale's mascot, in the lower left corner).



**New Haven Free Public Library**  
 133 Elm Street  
 Murals: Community Program Rm  
 Hours: M 12-8, T 10-6, W 10-6,  
 TH 10-8, F Closed, Sat 10-5,  
 Su Closed  
[www.cityofnewhaven.com/llibrary](http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/llibrary)

**The Story of Rip Van Winkle, Salvatore DeMaio with the assistance of Frank Rutkowski, E. Giles Young, Lois North, Alexandra Darrow, Joseph Schork, Pope, Jr. and Arthur Hull, oil plaster mural, 1934.** Washington Irving's 1819 tale serves as a warning for young audiences to avoid harmful behaviors. While Rip sleeps away twenty years of his life during the tumultuous age of the American Revolution, his family and friends suffer and move away, and he awakens to find himself old and alone.



**First Church of Christ In New Haven**  
 Also known as  
 Center Church on-the-Green  
 311 Temple Street  
 Rear exterior wall  
 Open viewing year-round  
[www.newhavencenterchurch.org](http://www.newhavencenterchurch.org)

**Memorial Plaque to Edward Whalley and Memorial Plaque to William Goffe, Peter Saldibar and Salvatore Milici, slate, 1934-35.** These two memorial plaques, which closely resemble ancient gravestones located in the crypt of Center Church, complement the close-by 1849 Memorial to John Dixwell. Whalley, Goffe and Dixwell signed the death warrant for England's King Charles I in 1649, and came to New Haven to flee soldiers of the restored monarchy.

*Credits: Project Director, Amy L. Trout, New Haven Museum & Historical Society; all photography (except Amistad) by William K. Sacco; Amistad mural photo by Patricia Garland; design and layout by Timothy Applebee; design and text by Laura A. Macaluso. This brochure supported by the Connecticut Humanities Council and TYCO.*

# 2. FAIR HAVEN



**A. The Inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Vincent Mondo with the assistance of Aldis B. Browne, Ferdinand Maiorani; and Stanley Novicki, mural, 1934.** An unusual subject for New Haven, this contemporary scene uses images of immigrants, intellectuals and civil servants wrapped in laurel wreaths framing a golden eagle to reinforce patriotic fervor and civic responsibility at a moment of great unease on the home front. The depiction of FDR's inauguration on March 4, 1933 is meaningful in both national and local contexts, since New Haven artists benefited directly from FDR's work relief programs.



# 4. WESTVILLE



**Westville Post Office**  
 95 Fountain Street  
 Mural Location: Lobby  
 Hours: M-F, 7:30-5, S 7:30 - Noon

**Pursuit of the Regicides, Karl Anderson, mural, 1939.** An important New Haven story retold visually time and again. Here the artist employs multiple symbolic references to New Haven's easily recognizable local history and geography, centering on the two Regicides, Whalley and Goffe, who crouch under rocks today known as "Judge's Cave." To the viewer's right is a well-known image of the Reverend John Davenport, copied from a historic portrait located in the Yale University Art Gallery, while a Quinnipiac Indian, mountain lion, red-tailed hawk and settlers complement the scene atop West Rock.

**Memorial Plaque to Susan S. Sheridan, Michele Martino and Michele Corda, mahogany bas-relief, 1936.**



**Sheridan Academy for Excellence**  
 191 Fountain Street  
 Center hallway  
 (over door to gymnasium)  
[www.nhps.net/sheridan/](http://www.nhps.net/sheridan/)





**B. John Brockett Laying Out New Haven Town Plan in 1638, Vincent Mondo with the assistance of Stanley J. Novicki, Lois North, Aldis B. Browne and Henry Skreczko, mural, 1934.** New Haven's colonial history is dictated by a landscape that demanded immediate attention by the European settlers: while Brockett (the surveyor) and Eaton (the governor) discuss their now famous Nine Square Plan, a young farmer and oxen – already working the land – rest below the famed red rock face of East Rock. To the far right, divided from the settlers by a winding river, stand a small group of Quinnipiacs, the indigenous people who signed land treaties with the settlers. Note the attention paid to local flora.



*Fair Haven Middle School*  
 164 Grand Avenue  
 Murals: Main Hallway  
[www.nhps.net/fairhaven](http://www.nhps.net/fairhaven)

### 3. WEST RIVER



*West River Memorial Park*  
 Ella T. Grasso Boulevard (Rte 10)  
 and Derby Avenue (Rte 34)  
 Open viewing year-round  
 Park closed at sunset



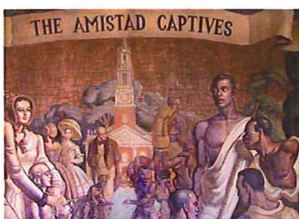
**Monument to Corporal Timothy Ahearn, Karl Lang, bronze, 1937.** A member of Company C, 102nd U.S. Infantry, 26th Division, Ahearn won the Distinguished Service Cross for action at Verdun on October 17, 1918. The story, inscribed on the monument's granite base, states that Corporal Ahearn deftly assumed control of his shattered unit when its commanders were killed. This New Haven hero reorganized the scattered troops, and in a note written on the back of an envelope from his mother, stated that he was "ready for any duty I am called to perform." Later that same day he rescued a wounded officer in the face of heavy machine gun fire.

### 5. DWIGHT/DIXWELL



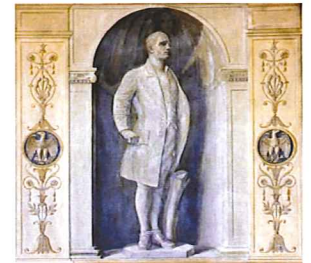
*2nd Company Governor's Footguard*  
 290 Goffe Street  
 Murals and Bas relief: Lounge  
 Open by appointment only.  
[www.footguard.org](http://www.footguard.org)

**Demanding the Keys to the Powder House, Salvatore Milici, painted bas-relief, 1938, (above) and The History of the Foot Guard Officers, Salvatore DeMaio, murals, 1938.** The 2nd Company Governor's Foot Guard has been serving both locally and nationally since its inception in 1775. The work depicts a well-known historical event in which Capt. Benedict Arnold and the 2nd Company Governor's Foot Guard demanded the keys to the powder house in order to arm themselves and begin a march to Cambridge, Mass., marking the entry of New Haven into the American Revolution. The event is re-enacted every year by the Foot Guard.



*Troup Magnet Academy of Science*  
 259 Edgewood Avenue  
 Multiple locations within school  
 Closed for renovations till late 2007

### 6. EAST SHORE



*Nathan Hale School*  
 480 Townsend Avenue  
 Murals: Library  
[www.nhps.net/nathanhale/](http://www.nhps.net/nathanhale/)

**Life of Nathan Hale, Thomas Folds with the assistance of John Ballator, Michele Russo, Lyndell Schwartz, Ernest Hart, and Francis Coiro, murals, 1938.** These murals highlight the abbreviated biography of Connecticut's state hero, hung by the British in 1776 for spying. Scenes from the young martyr's life include time spent farming, studying at Yale, and teaching. The center register is surrounded by classical statues of George Washington and Hale, painted in *grisaille* (grey tones). The image of Washington is based on a full-length portrait by John Trumbull, while the image of Hale is based on Bela Lyon Pratt's 1913 bronze sculpture, located next to Connecticut Hall on Yale's Old Campus where Hale lived as a student.



# The Federal Art Project, Selected Sites in New Haven, CT

