



# Historical Society *and* Museum

*The Rye Town Museum is open to visitors on Saturday mornings from 10 to 12 through October, and at almost all other times by appointment.*

Make your appointment online, email us at [info@ryenhhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@ryenhhistoricalsociety.org), or call 603-436-9278

Schedule Visit

## A Lofty Sign

**Barns are beautiful buildings in and of themselves. Sometimes what's in them is even better.**

Recently, the Werner family on Washington Road called us over to see something up in the loft of their barn. There it was — a piece of Rye's 20th century history and one that impacts us all to this day.

It's a painted wooden sign, measuring about 4'X4' and advertises the Parsons Park Corporation, created in 1977 by 151 Rye families to raise monies to buy the property in the center of town being sold for \$200,000 by Esther Parsons. According to Alex Herlihy, representing one of those families, "We raised \$50,000 as a down payment and then offered it for sale to the town using this sign, which was posted where the Christmas tree is today."



Over the next couple of years, the town did buy the field and then purchased the forest. According to Alex, "To her eternal credit, Esther waited patiently for this great success to play out because she wanted it to happen and not for it to be a subdivision."

And that's the story of why today we have Parsons Field, the site of so many town events. So, next time you're enjoying that open, beautiful space, thank Esther Parsons and the Parsons Park families for their foresight and community activism.

Oh, and what about the sign? Well, the Werners generously donated it to the Rye Historical Society! With the help of Mike Badger and Steve Cash, we got it down from its "home" of many, many years and brought it to the Museum. We are evaluating its condition and, because of its size, we need to understand how we can safely display it, even temporarily. We appreciate your patience as we figure all that out.

In the meantime, join us in thanking the Werner family for their interest and action in preserving an important piece of Rye history.

*Lew Karabatsos*  
*Chair, Collections Committee*

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## The camera's Eye on Rye



One Saturday morning, Karlotta Shanahan walked into the town museum with an envelope filled with treasures. A descendent of the Perkins family, she wanted the Historical Society to have a collection of photographs, ranging from the late 19th century to the 1960s. Among them are a photographic series of a storm along the Rye shore, the building of a portion of the jetty at Rye Harbor, class photos of Rye Elementary and Rye Junior High schools, and the "Tower House" on Perkins Road. Of particular interest is a late 19th/early 20th century interior-office photo that includes Frank Locke — but, what is the business? There are also two rarely seen 19th-century cabinet cards of children, Tony & Cecelia Francis, identified as being part of the family from Old Town Maine,

who set up a tent on the Farragut Hotel grounds to sell baskets and other handicrafts.

Thank you, Karlotta, for these interesting and welcomed additions to our collection!

*Lew Karabatsos*  
*Chair, Collections Committee*

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## What Is This?



An email we received: "Hello! I found this object on the beach near Rye Harbor. It was encrusted in rust. It seems quite old and crudely made. There are threads at the bottom which are visible in the 2nd photo. I'm wondering if anyone could identify it as to what its purpose may have been and perhaps its age. Thanks!"

Do you know what it is? [Click here](#) to answer!

*Ginna Macdonald*

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## Rye Day

On August 19th from 11 am - 5 pm  
we are celebrating Rye Day at  
Parsons Field. Music, fun and games



will take place throughout the day. We are looking for some more volunteers to help us make the day run smoothly. We need (please click on links to sign up):

[Volunteers for an aerial photo of people](#)

[Volunteers for games/set up/clean up](#)

## Rye Scavenger Hunt



How well do you know Rye? Join as a team or individually, but come on out on Saturday, August 5th and share in the fun on this Scavenger Hunt that will have you racing around town to collect clues. Great for adults and families. Sponsored by our friends at Meredith Village Savings Bank.

[Register here.](#)

## Rye400 Donors

The following individuals have made donations to Rye400 since the last newsletter. THANK YOU to:

### Founders — \$400+

Frank Drake — \$400  
 Bari & Michael Garceau — \$400  
 Alexandra Glickman — \$400  
 Sarah & Bill Orum — \$400

### Pioneers — \$40+

Marlene Jones — \$100  
 Karey Kelly — \$50  
 John & Pat Crane — \$40

### Other

Kathleen Clancy





We also welcome, with THANKS, our newest business sponsor — Meredith Village Savings Bank. MVSB is supporting the upcoming, fun-filled, town scavenger hunts — a walking one on August 5, and a driving one on October 14, 2023!



The Piscataqua Rangers Junior Fife and Drum Corps will lead off the festivities when [Rye Day](#) returns to Parsons Field on August 19.

## Rye400 Events for August

The Rye400 Committee invites you to enjoy these fun and interesting events this month. See you there!

- August 3: Isles of Shoals Boat Tour (sold out!)
- August 5: Rye Scavenger Hunt on Foot, 1:00-4:30 p.m., Rye Town Museum. Registration required — [www.ryenh400.org](http://www.ryenh400.org)
- August 6: Locke Family Reunion, Town Center
- August 9: [Panel discussion](#) “Commemorating 50 Years of Onassis Oil Defeat,” Rye Public Library, 6:30 p.m. (see related August 20 Swim)
- August 9: **Cancelled:** Deb Cross Lecture, “Wallis Sands Memories”
- August 11: Ribbon Cutting for the new historic markers around town, 4:30 p.m., Rye Town Common
- August 12: Caswell Family Reunion, Star Island
- August 13: [Summer Sessions/Rye Surf Day](#), 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m., Jenness Beach, ; two, one-hour classes for up to 20 participants each class; minimum age requirement is 12 years old
- August 16: Poet Mark Decarteret, Rye Public Library, 3:00-4:00 p.m.
- August 17: Tour of Pulpit Rock Tower, 12:00 -2:30 p.m. Registration required — [www.ryenh400.org](http://www.ryenh400.org)
- August 17: Rye Century Walk, 1942-1945 Fort Dearborn, Seacoast Science Center, 3:00 -4:30 p.m Registration required — [www.ryenh400.org](http://www.ryenh400.org)
- August 17: Presentation, “Portsmouth World War II Defenses,” speaker panel, Seacoast Science Center, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Registration required — [www.ryenh400.org](http://www.ryenh400.org)
- August 19: Odiorne Family Reunion, Odiorne State Park 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- August 19: Rye Day Festival & Entertainment, Parsons Field, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- August 20: Historic swim from Appledore Island to Wallis Sands,

For more details on each of these happenings, please visit [www.ryenh400.org](http://www.ryenh400.org)

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## Holiday Historic Home Tour

The Rye 400 committee is sponsoring a Rye Historic Home Holiday Tour on Saturday, December 2, 2023, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. The tour includes four homes and a barn, each with its own unique features and holiday finery:

Marden/Parsons Homestead 520 Washington Road (c.1757).

William Trefethen House 540 Washington Road (c. 1812)

William Berry House 546 Washington Road (c. 1725)

Dr. Charles F. Patterson House and Office 585 Washington Road (c.1900)

Simon Goss House Barn 1 Central Road (c.1810)

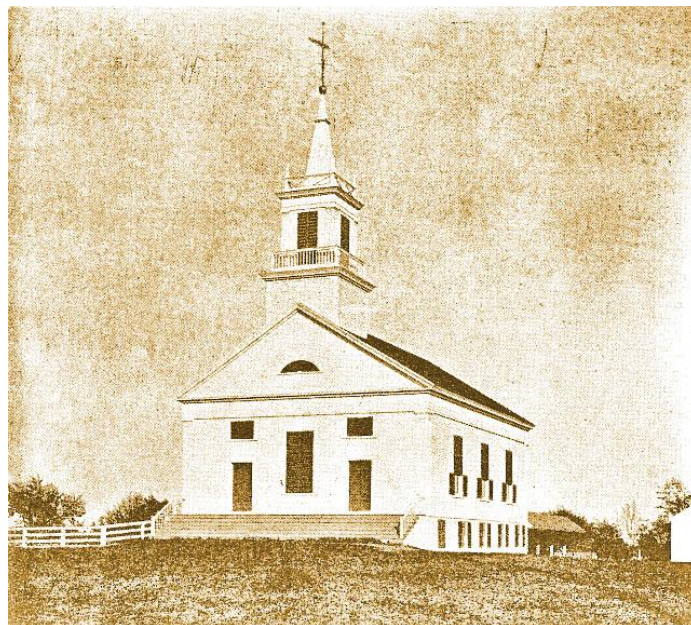
This will be a self-guided tour with a limited number of tickets to go on sale October 15, 2023.

Please mark your calendars for this wonderful historic holiday event.

*Jean Badger*  
*Committee Chair*

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## THIS MONTH IN RYE HISTORY



**August, 1837**

## Congregational Church Raised

With the retirement of Huntington Porter, Rye's long-serving third pastor, the congregation realized that the 1756 meetinghouse also needed replacing. Rye was by then a town rather than a parish, so a Congregational Society was formed to build a new church.

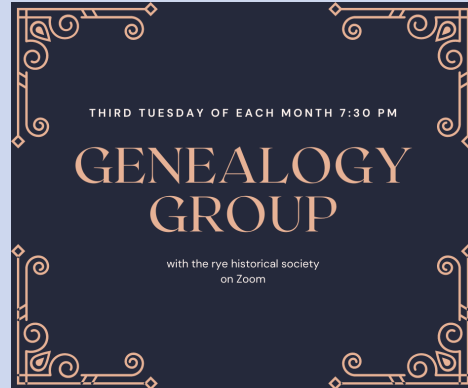
The 1837 church, pictured above, received major enhancements in 1891. including a portico, a clock and black walnut pews. Unfortunately, a disastrous fire leveled the building in 1959.

The rebuilt Congregational Church that graces Rye Center today was dedicated in June, 1961.

## Ongoing Free Programs



Free Self-Guided  
Rye Beach Block Tour [izi.TRAVEL](#)



## Get Involved



**Become a Member**



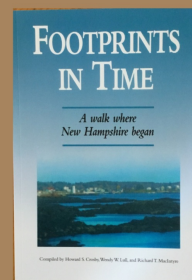
**Make A Donation**



**Volunteer**



**Visit Ye Olde Gift Shoppe**





**Vision:** To preserve and share Rye history by understanding the past, informing the present, and influencing the future.

**Mission:** To engage and educate a diverse population in Rye, New Hampshire's rich history through our programs, collections, and outreach, to encourage them to make a personal connection with their community.

**Rye Historical Society, 10 Olde Parish Road, P.O. Box 583, Rye NH 03870 • 603 436-9278**  
[info@ryenhistoricalociety.org](mailto:info@ryenhistoricalociety.org)

### **Follow RHS on Social Media**

Click the Icons below



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