



Photo provided by Archaeological and
Historical Services, Storrs, CT

Spear point, broken during
manufacture, recovered at the
Brian D. Jones Paleo-Indian site

UNEARTHING HISTORY:

THE DISCOVERY OF A 12,500 YEAR
OLD PALEO-INDIAN SITE ALONG THE
FARMINGTON RIVER IN AVON, CT

Lecture series will cover the archaeology, geology, and
anthropology of life along the Farmington River, with a
focus on the Brian D. Jones Paleo-Indian discovery in
Avon, Connecticut.

7:00 PM, VIA ZOOM FREE TO ATTEND
REGISTER AT: WWW.AVONCTLIBRARY.INFO

MARCH 4:

**Digging into Deep
History: Archaeology,
Artifacts, and Avocation**

Presented by Scott Brady,
President, Friends of the
State Archaeologist & Paul
Wegner, Assistant Director,
Institute for American Indian
Studies Museum (IAIS),
Washington, CT

APRIL 8:

**A Rift, not the River,
made the Farmington
Valley: The Geology of
western Connecticut
along US RT 44**

Presented by Howard
Wright, Renbrook School
Science Department Head

MAY 6:

**Connecticut Before History:
The Deep Story of
Human Settlement of the
Farmington Valley**

Presented by Dr. Ken Feder,
Archaeologist, Central
Connecticut State University,
and Founder of the Farmington
River Archaeology Project

2021 Webinar Series created by :
Avon Historical Society
Avon Free Public Library
Avon Senior Center

Sponsored by a grant from:



Unearthing History series begins!

Avon, CT Jan. 2021 - The partnership of the Avon Historical Society, Avon Free Public Library and Avon Senior Center is pleased to present a five-part webinar series entitled "**Unearthing History: The Discovery of a 12,500 year old Paleo-Indian Site along the Farmington River in Avon, CT**" beginning on March 4th held via Zoom through a link from the Library. It is available free of charge. Sign up at: www.avonctlibrary.info

This series of five lectures is being held in response to the 2018-2019 excavation of a 12,500-year-old (10,000BC) Paleo-Indian site six feet below ground during a CT Department of Transportation construction project of the now completed bridge on Old Farms and Waterville Roads at Route 10 in Avon, CT. The survey uncovered more than 15,000 artifacts that are characteristic of the Early and Middle Paleo-Indian periods. The site is named for Brian D. Jones, the late Connecticut State Archaeologist, who led the effort to dig deep based on earlier digs in the area over the past few decades. As of this writing, this site is considered the oldest archaeological site of its kind in the region.

The "Unearthing History" webinar series will break down the many pieces of scientific work done during and after a dig of this kind. Experts in the field of geology, archaeology, anthropology, sociology and the Farmington River will provide background and help in understanding the rich nature of this site. At a very large public presentation in Avon one year ago, pre-pandemic, Dr. David Leslie of the Archaeological and Historical Services (AHS) of Storrs, CT, the firm contracted by the CT DOT to do the excavation and multi-year analysis, provided a large array of scientific data compiled in their first year of analysis. After that presentation many in the audience asked questions such as how and why this site has been preserved for so long, what is radiocarbon dating, how the early people came to choose this site to work at, how they lived and what role did the Farmington River play in all this. The Society, Library and Senior Center, with cooperation by the Town of Avon, have taken the lead to provide educational events for the public on all aspects of the site for as long as the analysis takes to develop. They thank the Farmington Bank Community Foundation for financial support of this year long series.

According to Dr. Lucianne Lavin of the Institute for American Indian Studies in Washington, CT, site of a slightly later Paleo-Indian site, the last Ice Age in this region began to melt away about 17,500BP (Before the Present). As it receded, a lush new land was exposed that provided for animal life to return about 13,500BP in the form of tundra-grazing animals such as mastodons, mammoths, horses, giant beaver, caribou, and more. The ancient communities of the Paleo-Indians are thought to have begun to arrive in the northeast after that time in search of those animals for food. They were the first settlers of what is now Connecticut and southern New England. (*Connecticut's Indigenous Peoples*, by Lucianne Lavin, 2013, Yale University Press)

The first webinar entitled "Digging into Deep History: Archaeology, Artifacts and Avocation" will be held on Thursday, March 4 at 7:00pm. It will be presented by Scott Brady, President, Friends of the State Archeologist & Paul Wegner, Assistant Director, Institute for American Indian Studies Museum (IAIS), Washington, CT. They will provide answers to questions such as what does an archaeologist actually do? How do they find the things they find, and what happens to these objects once they are recovered? They will discuss archaeology, its practice, and how avocational archaeology helps to involve the public while bringing much needed assistance to archaeologists in the field. Scott and Paul will share stories of excavations and important finds that contribute to Connecticut's deep history.

The second webinar entitled "A Rift, not the River, made the Farmington Valley: The geology of western Connecticut along US Route 44" will be held on Thursday, April 8 at 7:00pm. It will be presented by Howard Wright, Renbrook School Science Department Head. This will be a first ever photographic journey focused on the geology of Route 44 in western CT and adjacent areas. Understanding the geology of the area will help everyone "read" the local landscape with greater awareness and appreciation of why early people came here.

The third webinar entitled “Connecticut Before History: The Deep Story of Human Settlement of the Farmington Valley” will be held on Thursday, May 6 at 7:00pm. It will be presented by Dr. Ken Feder, Archaeologist, Central Connecticut State University. The Farmington Valley was originally settled by human beings more than 10,000 years ago. The Farmington River Archaeological Project, led by Feder, has revealed remains of the villages, hunting encampments, and quarries used by these first settlers. Similar to the way police investigate the scene of a crime, archaeologists locate, recover, and examine evidence that reveals the scene of a life lived in the past. Feder will discuss some of the sites his crews have excavated and share the stories that can be told of the lives of the people who lived, worked, and died in those ancient Farmington Valley communities. (see Page 7 of this newsletter to view a typical Paleo-Indian “tool kit”)

The remaining 2 events for September and October will be announced in the Spring newsletter. The Society, Library and Senior Center thanks a planning committee of experts for assisting with developing this series: Marc Banks, PhD, LLC, Archaeologist; Nancy Najarian, Institute of Native American Studies; Beckie Sahl, Farmington River Watershed Association; Howard Wright, Renbrook School Science Department Head.

Adaptive reuse of Schoolhouse No. 3 has begun!



The Society is pleased to announce the official start of the adaptive reuse (renovation not restoration) of Schoolhouse No. 3 located at 8 East Main Street, Route 44. In September repair work on the exterior of the chimney was completed. This winter the town Department of Public Works is renovating the cellar – installing new a floor, walls, ceiling, bathroom and HVAC. It is expected to take several months, maybe through the summer, to complete the cellar. This is step one in what is expected to be a two to three-year process that will create a more permanent museum of Avon’s history. To date, 60% of the funds for this project have been raised. Fundraising is still going on. Donations can be sent to the Society at any time.

Much thanks to Gene Macy, members of his family and Lee Wilson for removing everything from the cellar for this work to be done. It took many days and many truck loads to move everything. Cleaned items from the Derrin House fire were returned to the Derrin House. Other items were moved to a donated unit at [Avon Self Storage](#). The climate-controlled unit is housing most all the most delicate artifacts in the collection including clothing, hanging dresses, coats, books, and boxes of archival materials. In addition, wooden shelving from the cellar is being sanded and repainted to match the new space. Before and after photos of the cellar work will be in the Spring newsletter. This is a shared project between the Avon Historical Society and the Town of Avon. Built in 1823, it is the oldest structure owned by the Town. The Society has a 99-year lease to use it as it’s headquarters, archival storage and show it as a museum.



The Three Temperance Societies of Avon

By Nora O. Howard

Historian Avon Congregational Church, and of the Town of Avon

The Temperance movement of the 1800s sought to stop alcohol consumption. The founders and members believed that this was the best way to bring peace to communities and homes. After the American Temperance Society formally began in Boston in 1826, thousands of clubs sprung up around the United States. Members of these societies promised not to consume distilled beverages, or as time went by, any alcoholic drinks.

The movement in Connecticut began in 1829, with persuasive sermons and publications by the Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher, pastor of the Litchfield Congregational Church and Harriet Beecher Stowe's father.

The short-lived "Temperance Society of Northington First Parish" [Avon] was established that same year. Sixty-nine members soon signed up, but the minutes abruptly stopped two years later in 1831. The problem persisted. There were plenty of distilleries making alcohol in the Valley, and it was widely available to Avon's approximately 1,000 residents.

A dozen years later, Rev. Stephen Hubbell of the Avon Congregational Church again took up the cause. The Avon (East) Temperance Society was established on May 15, 1843. Membership was open to anyone in Avon who signed the pledge "not use intoxicating liquors nor traffic in them as a beverage, ...[to] not provide them as an article of entertainment, or for persons in our employment and that in all suitable ways...[discontinue] their use throughout the community." The minutes listed the names of many Avon residents who signed the pledge, and a list of "the fallen."

There were about 130 founding members of the Avon Temperance Society in 1843, and four years later, 191 members. Of this number, 154 lived in Avon, and many were children and youth. The first meeting was at the Center School on Country Club Road, east of the current Avon Free Public Library; now located at 6 East Main Street and called Schoolhouse No. 3. The Avon Temperance Society had a Constitution and elected officers. The Society was an auxiliary member of both the Hartford Temperance Society and the Connecticut State Temperance Society. Delegates from Avon's "Friends of Temperance" attended the the County Temperance Annual Meetings in Bloomfield, Bristol, Canton, and Collinsville.

Temperance meetings were held monthly in Avon. The Society donated money to buy books for a "social choir" at the Avon Congregational Church; it also paid for lectures, including one by Rev. Hubbell. He was asked to "repeat his very able and interesting Lecture on the subject of Temperance."

In 1845, Rev. Hubbell brought the famous temperance reformer John B. Gough to lecture at the Avon Congregational Church meetinghouse. Another Avon Congregational Church pastor, the Rev. James Moulton, wrote years later in his *Historical Address of 1919* how Rev. Hubbell's embrace of Dr. Lyman Beecher's temperance movement was successful in "checking the tide of intemperance that had become a curse to hundreds of communities in our land."

The members valued the "peace and good order of this community and the highest in trust of the rising generation" and so pledged that they would "stand firm in resisting such encroachments of law and order," and would "support our officers whose appropriate business it is to inform against places of this kind...."

In 1847, the minutes recorded the Temperance Society's success: "The peace of families [in Avon] is not as often disturbed by the intemperate struggler as in former years, many who used intoxicating drinks have partially abstained or use them less freely than formally. Antipathies to the cause are wearing away, and more harmony exists among the friends of Temperance...." But, members were told, do not "cease laboring in the

good cause for there are multitudes of men to be reformed and a great work to be done before the Temperance Millennium will dawn even in the land of steady habits."

There was then a gap in the Minute Book, and the Minutes resumed 14 years later on April 12, 1861. The Friends of Temperance in Avon met, "in answer to the invitation of [Avon Congregational Church pastor] Rev. E. D. Murphy, who occupied the chair." The Friends of Temperance organized a new (the third) Temperance Society of Avon.

It was time, recorded the Minutes, to "renew efforts to suppress the evils of intemperance and to promote a healthy sentiment on the subject of temperance throughout the community." Under the leadership of Rev. Murphy, and with "due notice given from the pulpit," the Society members circulated a Pledge throughout Avon. Out of 150 people approached, 80 were "willing to sign." They used the Constitution (with a few changes) of Avon's first Temperance Society of 1829. The new Temperance Society of Avon was an auxiliary of the County Temperance Society.

The Minutes of the 1861 Society abruptly ended after just two months on June 19, 1861 – a time coinciding with the beginning of the Civil War.

Officers of the Society:

(Founding Officers, 1843)

Milner Case, Secretary [ACC MEMBER]

Darius Sperry, VP [ACC MEMBER]

Watson Wilcox, President

Exec Committee: Charles Buckley(ACC Member), Luther Wheeler, Robert Woodford, Niles Whiting, Truman Woodford, Eri Gillitt (his wife Huldah was an ACC Member), Harry Chidsey (ACC Member).

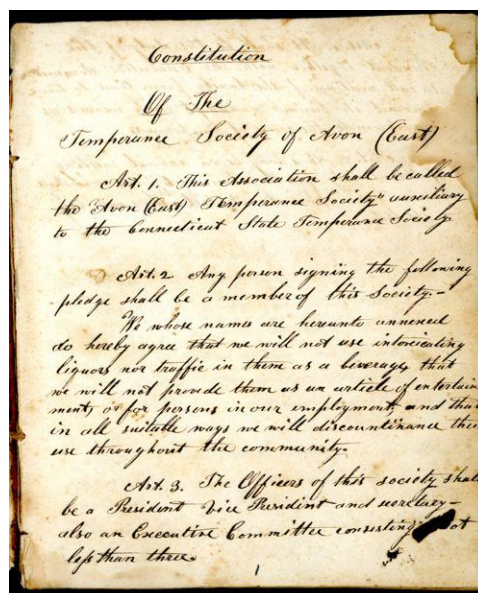
Sources:

Avon, An Historical Society, by Mackie, pp. 123-125.

The Minute Book of the Temperance Society of Avon (East). **Collection of ACC**

Joseph Moulton, *Historical Address*, 1919.

Map of Avon, 1830, reprinted by the Avon Historical Society



The Minute Book of the Temperance Society of Avon is in the archives of the Avon Congregational Church. It has been scanned and is available online at [Connecticut Digital Archive/Avon Free Public Library](#) collection.

GENERAL NEWS



View from TablesCAPES 2019

The Avon Historical Society's annual *TABLESCAPES* event, held every March, is postponed to Spring 2022 due to the ongoing pandemic. For the past few years, the Avon Historical Society has held a beautiful, creative event at the beginning of Spring featuring themed table decorations and fresh flowers. Last year's event was scheduled to run in mid March, but was canceled when the pandemic started. The Society's Board of Trustees decided to resume the event in Spring of 2022 when it should be safe for indoor gatherings. For those who bought sponsorships or tickets to *TABLESCAPES* in 2020, they will be honored in 2022. If anyone wishes a reimbursement for tickets or sponsorship, please contact the Avon Historical Society at info@avonhistoricalsociety.org or by leaving a voice mail message at 860-678-7621.

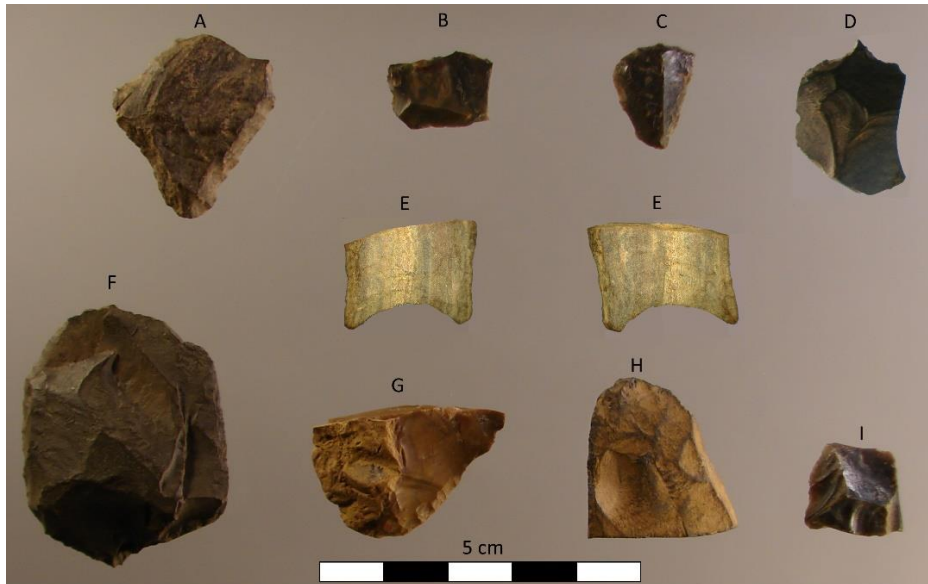
In case you missed it...the Avon Free Public Library received much news in the local media for a milestone of local history proportions! Thanks to the efforts of library reference staff and volunteers of the Local History Room, over 10,000 items have been scanned and uploaded to the Connecticut Digital Archive project of the Connecticut State Library. The lucky 10,000th item to be added was a page from the "Lure of Litchfield Hills," a magazine published twice a year from 1940 to the mid-1970s. This free access project has been very beneficial for any researcher or genealogist looking for information on Avon. Among the 10,000+ Avon items digitized are pictures of families, farms, letters, documents, maps, the 1997 state survey of historic properties and more. The nice part about this project is you don't need a library card to access it, it's open to all. To access the Avon section, visit: <https://ctdigitalarchive.org/> and search under Avon Free Public Library.

Speaking of research, over the past two years the Ancient Burying Ground Association has created a database and biographical profiles of African, African American and Native American individuals buried in the Ancient Burying Ground (1640-1815) on Main Street in Hartford. This 'digital humanities project' recently received an Award of Merit from the Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO), the trade association of historic societies in Connecticut. To access this unique and ever-growing database, visit: <https://www.africannativeburialsct.org/>

If you are able, grab your free copy of the Town of Avon 2019-2020 Annual Report and 2021 Calendar from the Library or Town Hall. The front cover is a full color drone photo of the new bridge at Avon Old Farms and Waterville Roads, over the excavation of the Brian D. Jones Paleo-Indian site. And on Page 34 is a report of the Avon Historical Society activities in 2020; the unique year that it was!

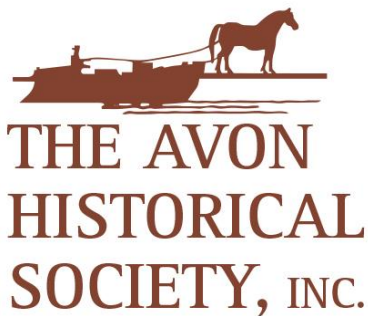
You may have noticed that the Avon Historical Society and its members have had monthly articles about our local history in *TODAY Magazine*. The publisher of the magazine has moved to a digital format, for the remainder of the pandemic, allowing for a wider readership and increased content. The Society will continue to submit articles of local interest. To see the digital version, visit: <https://www.todaypublishing.net/>

In November 2020 the Abigail Phelps Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Simsbury, presented Society President, Terri Wilson, with one of two "Excellence in Community Service" awards for her work with the Avon Historical Society, partnering with several other organizations for programming and exhibits and in winning grants for various projects of the Society. The other awardee was Cheryl Cook of Simsbury.



Formal tools representing the typical Paleoindian toolkit, recovered from the Brian Jones site in Avon:
 (A) Northern NH rhyolite end scraper; (B) chalcedony end scraper; (C) chalcedony end scraper; (D) Hudson River Valley (NY) chert graver; (E) Northern NH rhyolite fluted point spear fragment (reverse and obverse); (F) Hudson River Valley (NY) chert side scraper; (G) Delaware River Valley (PA) jasper side scraper; (H) Suffield (CT) hornfels wedge; and (I) chalcedony wedge.

Photo courtesy of Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc., Storrs, CT



The mission of the Avon Historical Society, founded in 1974, is to identify, collect, preserve, utilize, publish, display and promote the history and heritage of Avon.

2020-2021 Officers and Board of Trustees

Officers:

Terri Wilson, President
 Dr. Helaine Bertsch, Vice President
 open, Secretary
 Eric Thronson, Treasurer

Trustees:

Mary Harrop
 Gene Macy
 Carolyn McGrattan
 Cal Miller-Stevens
 Sebastian Saraceno
 Heddy Panik
 Brian Malone
 Carol Bradovchak

MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Contact the Society for details.

Do you shop Amazon? If you do, please go to: <http://smile.amazon.com> and CHOOSE the Avon Historical Society, Avon, CT to have .5% of your purchase donated to us! It is simple and free.

PO Box 448, Avon, CT 06001-0448, 860.678.7621 • avonhistoricalsociety.org

