

## On the road again (and again)

The schoolhouse where **Nathan Hale** taught has shuttled about New London six times since it was built around 1774

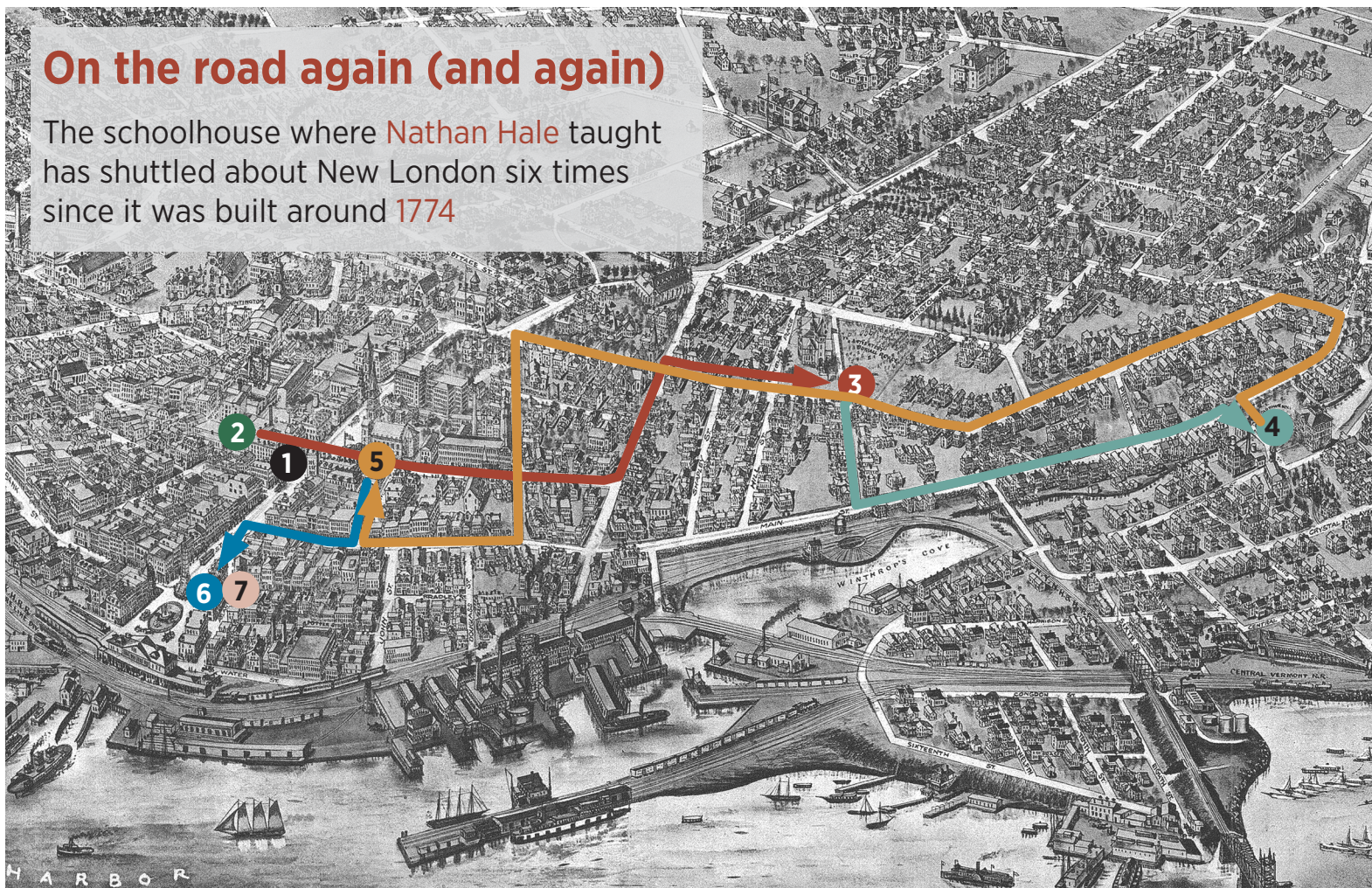


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT RITTER AND JOHN RUDDY/THE DAY

Nathan Hale was hired in 1774 to teach in New London at the newly built Union School on State Street, where the Crocker House stands today. Hale would resign a year later to join the Revolution; he was soon hanged as a spy by the British. As Hale's stature grew, efforts were made to preserve the schoolhouse. Finding a permanent home became a monumental challenge. We used a 1911 bird's-eye view map, published by New York City-based Hughes & Bailey, to show the building's 2.6-mile journey through city streets over the years.

## The Nathan Hale Schoolhouse: *A travelogue*

As landmark reaches its 250th anniversary, a look back at its endless journey around New London

Story by **JOHN RUDDY**  
Graphics by **SCOTT RITTER**  
The Day

When Connecticut celebrated its 300th birthday in 1935, New London was represented in a parade by a 12-foot-long replica of the Nathan Hale Schoolhouse.

It was on wheels. Most of what makes that funny hadn't happened yet, but in later years, the sight of the building rolling down the street wasn't exactly rare. Throughout the spectacle of its many moves, the gambrel-roofed landmark has survived, first by chance, then by design, and finally in defiance of New London's refusal

to just leave it alone. Now enjoying a well-deserved rest at its seventh location, the schoolhouse has become a punchline reflecting the zaniness of life in New London.

It also continues to serve its primary purpose, sustaining the memory of Hale. The future hero was hired to teach there 250 years ago this month.

To mark the anniversary, here are the travels and travails of a building that couldn't sit still.

### Stop 1: State Street

"Commodious" was how the schoolhouse was described in 1774, just after it was built as a private institution called Union School. The building went up on what's

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This story was drawn primarily from the archives of The Day. Go online and click links in the text to see original stories on [Newspapers.com](http://Newspapers.com).

The online version of the story also includes a different map showing the schoolhouse's locations and a video filmed during its most recent move in 2009.

now State Street where the Crocker House is. An English education and classical preparation for college were to be offered.

The proprietors' petition for

incorporation caught the attention of Hale, a recent Yale graduate then teaching in East Haddam. He was hired in March 1774 and took charge of a class of 32 boys. He also taught 20 girls from 5 to 7 a.m.

By all accounts he was popular, both with students and the school's administrators.

"They are desirous that I would continue and settle in the school, and propose a considerable increase of wages," he wrote his uncle. "I am much at a loss whether to accept their proposals."

The outbreak of the Revolution in 1775 settled the matter, and Hale resigned to join the war. He was soon hanged as a spy by the British, after

**SEE NATHAN PAGE A6**

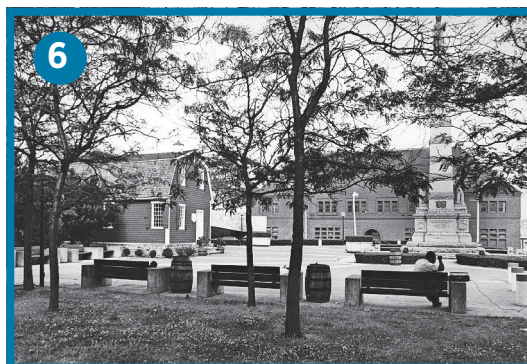
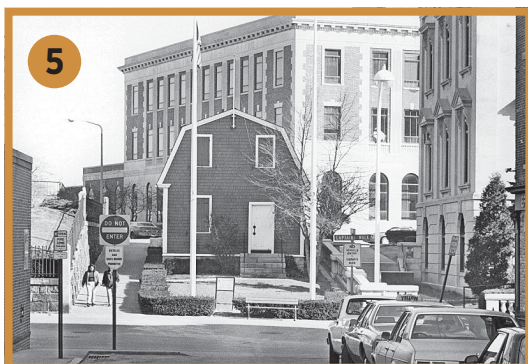
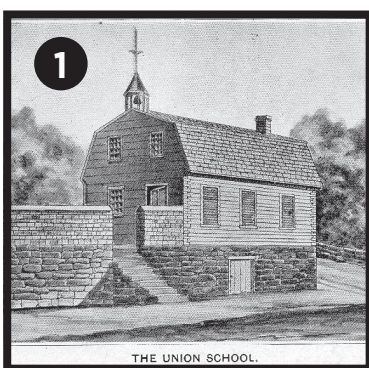


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## What's next for the RCDA?

With Fort Trumbull's future planned out, city's development arm looks ahead

By **JOHN PENNEY**  
Day Staff Writer

**New London** — Last September, attorney Bill Sweeney stood in front of the city's Planning and Zoning Commission to praise a development deal that would transform three long-vacant Fort Trumbull parcels into two apartment complexes and a six-story parking garage.

"This is a day a lot of us have been waiting for," he said, calling the proposals brokered by the Renaissance City Development Association — the city's development arm — and his client, New Haven-based RJ Development + Advisors, another step toward reinventing the peninsula into a "place of new vibrancy" that would complete the redevelopment of the area.

The Fort Trumbull area in the late 1990s was cleared of homes and businesses as part of a plan developed by the city and the New London Development Corp., the predecessor of the RCDA, to help jump-start economic development in association with the construction of Pfizer's research headquarters.

Except for construction of the Pfizer facility, now occupied by Electric Boat, and Fort Trumbull State Park, the rest of the peninsula remained undeveloped for years, with the area becoming overgrown and devoid of activity.

But with all Fort Trumbull properties now obligated for use — but not yet developed — the RCDA has only one major new project on its plate: the redevelopment of a pair of commercial fishing piers at the northern end of the peninsula.

RCDA notes on its website that its overarching mission, to work with **SEE RCDA PAGE A7**

### WEATHER

Today, morning clouds and showers, partly sunny and breezy. High 55. Monday, sunny. High 49. **B6**

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