

Harold G. Pierpont

1898 - 1969

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail ."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Harold Granger Pierpont was born in Waterbury on March 3, 1898, the sixth child of Wilson and Annie (Merrill) Pierpont.

Pierpont's mother died shortly after he was born, due to complications from childbirth. His father arranged for him to live with a foster family in Prospect. Pierpont grew up on the farm of Samuel and Hattie (Chandler) Nichols, the only child in their household. He received his education at Prospect's one-room schoolhouse. Pierpont's formal education ended with eighth grade.

In 1919, Pierpont married Sara Blackman, the daughter of a Prospect farmer who also worked in Waterbury factories. The couple moved to Waterbury and settled in the East End, where they raised their family of five children. Pierpont worked at a variety of places over the decades, but his greatest work was his volunteer activity creating and maintaining hiking trails throughout the region.

Over the course of three decades, Pierpont managed 125 miles of hiking trails for the Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA) and the Appalachian Trail, serving as Trail Chairman for the Waterbury section of Blue Blazed Trails beginning in 1941. He was inspired to volunteer as a trail blazer during the summer of 1938, when he and his 12-year-old son went on a three-day hike of the Metacomet Trail in Meriden. The trail was so badly overgrown, they had to blaze their own trail. As a result, Pierpont wrote to the CFPA to inform them of the trail conditions and to volunteer his services in maintaining the trails.

Pierpont was assigned his own five mile section of the Quinnipiac Trail, and once displaying that he could easily manage the assignment, he was placed in charge of the trail from Bethany Mountain Road in Cheshire to the termination in Wolcott, at what was called the Grand Junction.

The CFPA offered Pierpont the position of the Trail Chairman of the Waterbury section of the Blue Trail in 1941. In addition to the Quinnipiac Trail, he was now responsible for the Mattatuck Trail from Wolcott to the Naugatuck River, including all connecting trails. Pierpont's passion and dedication to the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails would eventually lead him to becoming responsible for maintaining one hundred miles of the trail system.

Pierpont was also responsible for deciding where new trails were needed and choosing their layout, making sure that the trails he created

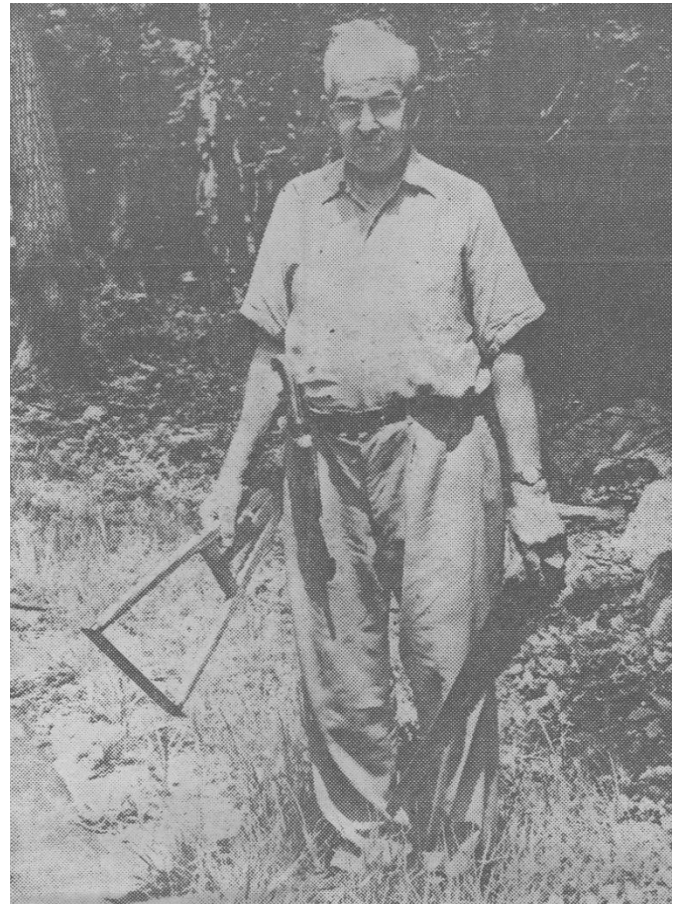


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included impressive ridgeline views from the tops of hills and mountains.

During the 1940s and '50s, Pierpont also volunteered with the Connecticut Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), maintaining that section of the Appalachian Trail and serving as Chairman of the Mt. Riga Committee in 1955 and '56. The committee oversaw the creation of the AMC's Northwest Camp near the border with Massachusetts.

By 1968 Pierpont had begun to transfer much of his area to a new generation of trailsmen, maintaining two short sections of the trail system himself until his death in 1969. After his death, students and faculty at Waterbury's East Farms School, where Pierpont had maintained a garden and given talks about nature, planted four trees in his memory.

Harold G. Pierpont's work left an impact on the Greater Waterbury area that is still felt today. It is because of his efforts and his passion that future generations have continued to explore, hike and appreciate the Blue-Blazed Trail system.