



HERITAGE TOURISM ACTIVITIES

Norwich, Connecticut

2016 Report

ABOUT HERITAGE TOURISM

Tourism is essential to a community's economic vitality, sustainability, and profitability.

Heritage tourism encompasses elements of living culture, history, and natural history of place that communities value and steward for the future. These elements are very specific to a community or region and can contribute to pride, stability, growth, and economic development.

The economic benefits of heritage tourism include creating new jobs and businesses, increasing tax revenues, and diversifying the local economy. These economic benefits are not the only reason why heritage tourism is important for Norwich — it provides quality-of-life benefits as well. Heritage tourism helps preserve the City's unique character, which results in greater civic pride. As the market grows, there will be more opportunities available such as shops, activities, and entertainment offerings that the local market alone cannot support.

TOURISM IN CONNECTICUT

\$8.3 Billion in sales related to travel
118,000 jobs

5.3% of all employment statewide
\$315.5 million in state revenues
\$190 million in local government revenues

Day travelers spent **\$3.2 Billion**
Were the Connecticut tourism industry a single business, it would rank #317 on the Fortune 500 list similar in size to Hormel Foods, and larger than MasterCard Incorporated, Campbell's Soup Company, Coca-Cola, Enterprises, or Avis.

HERITAGE TOURISM'S 2016 ECONOMIC IMPACT IN NORWICH, CT

Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors' Center Economic Impact: *about \$58,000- to \$165,000*

Walktober's Economic Impact: *about \$36,000 – to \$102,000*

Second Saturday Walking Tour's Economic Impact: *about \$8,000 – to \$23,000*

Leffingwell House Museum's Economic Impact: *about \$54,000 – to \$154,000*

Slater Memorial Museum's Economic Impact: *about \$240,000- to \$700,000*

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT IN NORWICH, CT

about \$396,000- to \$1,144,000

STATS FROM OTHER NORWICH DESTINATIONS

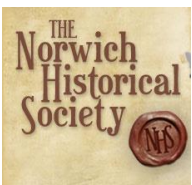
Slater Memorial Museum

January- December 2016: **4,143 visitors**

Leffingwell House Museum

April – October 2016: **936 visitors**

THE NORWICH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Norwich Historical Society is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation and its mission is to help preserve, protect and promote the rich history of the City of Norwich, CT. NHS has a volunteer Board of Directors and has over 400 members. The Norwich Historical Society promotes the history of Norwich through newsletters, educational lectures, and walking tours.

WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED (2015-2016)



- NHS created two Walk Norwich self-guided walking trails; the “Uncas Leap Trail” and the “Benedict Arnold Trail.” Walk Norwich utilizes a mobile friendly website (walknorwich.org) which hosts the walks, a self-guided brochure, and signage. The Walks officially launched on May 25, 2016.
- Sponsored the 2016 Annual Meeting hosted by Historian, Damien Cregeau, on Spies of the American Revolution.
- NHS engaged the services of five student interns from the Norwich Free Academy to research a topic in Norwich’s history and write an article to be published in future Norwich Historical Society newsletters. Students worked on their articles while staffing the Visitors’ Center and engaging with the public.
- NHS collaborated with many heritage groups to host the Samuel Huntington Wreath Laying Ceremony, Samuel Huntington Pub Crawl and History Day on the Norwichtown Green during the summer of 2016.
- Assisted with the coordination efforts for The Last Green Valley Walktober Walks in Norwich. As a result of NHS’s coordination, Norwich offered over 35 walks and events for Walktober 2016.
- Sponsored the 2016 Second Saturday Walking Tour Series. Walks included: Ye Olde Antient Burial Ground, Architecture along the Benedict Arnold Trail and the Norwich Millionaires’ Triangle. Each walk had 30-100 participants from Norwich and around the region.
- Sponsored the 2016 William B. Stanley Lecture Series. Our topic was the Norwich Harbor and the Thames River and NHS hosted a series of 5 lectures on the topic by local speakers.

THE NORWICH HERITAGE GROUPS



In 2013, representatives from all the heritage-based organizations in Norwich met to find ways to collaborate, worked to find the fit between the community and tourism interests, make sites and programs come alive, focus on quality and authenticity and preserve and protect resources. A Peer Advisor Network consultant facilitated the meeting and wrote a summary report. The Norwich Heritage groups are comprised of representatives from:

The Society of the Founders of Norwich, Otis Library, The Norwich Historical Society, Norwich Community Development Corporation, Slater Memorial Museum, The Harbor Management Commission, Heritage Radio 1700AM, The Civil War Roundtable, Friends of Norwich Bells, The Mohegan Tribe, Norwich City Historian, The Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce, The City of Norwich, The Guns of Norwich Historical Society, the Norwich Historic District Commission, the Last Green Valley and the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition.

The mission of the Norwich Heritage Groups is to promote heritage tourism in Norwich and build awareness of the many rich cultural landmarks in Norwich, CT. Since the initial meeting in 2013, the Norwich Heritage Groups have met quarterly and organized two tourism receptions in Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 in order to draw members of the Hospitality Industry and Visitors to Norwich, created a heritage tourism rack card and opened the Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors’ Center in 2015.

THE NORWICH HERITAGE & REGIONAL VISITORS' CENTER



The Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors Center is located in the 1783 Dr. Daniel Lathrop Schoolhouse on the historic Norwichtown Green. Our mission is to inform residents and visitors about places of interest in the region and about Norwich's rich heritage through exhibits, presentations and activities. The Center serves as a place to meet, learn and appreciate Norwich's heritage. The Center and self-guided walks attract people from the Greater Norwich area, the region and beyond. The Visitors' Center opened to fanfare and festivities on June 12, 2015.



On permanent display in the Center is the "Discover Norwich" exhibit, which is a 10-panel exhibit encompassing themes in Norwich's history from the 17th to the 20th century. The panels have interpretive text in addition to historical images and maps of the specific eras. The "Discover Norwich" exhibit gives visitors and locals an overview of Norwich's rich history.

VISITOR DATA

Overall, from May - October 2016, over 1,000 visitors enjoyed the Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors' Center.

Visitors came from regional towns such as:

Simsbury, Watertown, East Haven, Plainfield, Danbury, Woodstock, Manchester, Old Saybrook, Milford and the Greater Norwich Area.

In addition, visitors from out of state came from:

Maryland, Massachusetts, Illinois, Hawaii, Arizona, New York, Colorado, California, Texas, Pennsylvania, Washington, Oregon, New Jersey, Iowa, Virginia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maine, Missouri and Georgia.

Lastly, visitors came from the following countries:

Japan, Germany, Australia, Scotland and England

The Visitors' Center opened for many activities this season such as:

- *The Norwich Community Cinema's summer movies on the Norwichtown Green*
- *Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce's acoustic music nights on the Norwichtown Green*
- *CT Open House Day on June 11, 2016; children played with colonial toys and wrote with a feather quill.*
- *Private tours of the Benedict Arnold Trail for the Friendship Force and the French Alliance*
- *History Day on the Norwichtown Green on August 28, 2016; Sister Bette Jean of the Mohegan Tribe told tribal stories in the Visitors' Center.*
- *Author, Zachary Lamothe, presented on his new book More Connecticut Lore: Guidebook to 82 Strange Locations in October 2016.*

How visitors heard about the Center:

- **The Bulletin**
- **The Day**
- **The Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce**
- **Norwich Historical Society**
- **Facebook/Internet National Park Service Stamp**
- **The Last Green Valley**
- **Walktober**
- **Driving or walking by**



Left:
CT Open House Day June 11, 2016
Children played with colonial toys
and wrote with a feather quill.

Right:
GNACC Rockin' the Green Friday
nights summer 2016



Left:
History Day on the
Norwichtown
Green on August
28, 2016

Right:
Zachary Lamothe
book signing on
October 22, 2016



NORWICH WALKTOBER

More Walks • More Visitors • More Great Experiences



The City of Norwich is proud to be a member of the Last Green Valley. **The Last Green Valley is a National Heritage Corridor comprised of 35 towns in Eastern Connecticut and Southern Massachusetts.** The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) is a nonprofit charitable organization established in 1995. They are advocates for the fragile and irreplaceable resources of The Last Green Valley. Founded as a grassroots organization, and built upon a proven track record of success and partnerships, TLGV is ensuring a natural and cultural legacy for generations to come.

During the past 25 years, the Last Green Valley sponsored walks which began as “Walking Weekends” in October and which have morphed from one weekend of guided walking tours to a month-long event called Walktober. Norwich’s participation in Walktober has grown exponentially over the past few years and we proudly offered over 35 walks and events for Walktober 2016!

Above: Regan Miner, Consultant for the Norwich Historical Society gives 26 participants a guided tour of the Benedict Arnold Trail through the Colonial Burial Ground on September 24, 2016.

Right: Chief Tim Jencks, center, of the Taftville Fire Department, leads a tour of 49 people on the "Two Bells Beckon: Taftville Community and the Ponemah Mill," in the Taftville section of Norwich on Sunday, Oct. 16, 2016. (Tim Martin/The Day)



MEET TEAM WALKTOBER 2016



Dianne Brown & Regan Miner

The Mr. or Ms. Walktober honor has been bestowed upon only a small number of walk leaders over the past few years, and this year we introduce a dynamic duo from Norwich as they join this extraordinary club! Dianne & Regan have teamed up to provide what is becoming a model for other towns organizing a Walktober lineup. All Norwich Walktober experiences are gathered and strategically scheduled to offer attendees memory-making visits. You can plan to spend a day in Norwich and comfortably attend more than one Walktober experience

ANTIENANT GHOSTS OF NORWICH TOUR



The Norwich Historical Society hosts an annual Ghost tour in the Colonial Burial Ground on the Friday before Halloween and we discuss colonial history and spooky tales. As dusk approaches, three volunteer tour guides leave the Visitors' Center with their groups and traverse through the illuminated burial ground.

An army of volunteers and NFA project outreach students decorate the burial ground with luminaries and ghostly scenes. Additionally, two reenactors interpret historic figures such as Hannah Arnold and Samuel Huntington that are buried in the Burial Ground. The Norwich Police Department always sends their community policing unit to ensure the safety of our participants.



The Ghost Tour is our most popular Walktober offerings and our attendance has steadily increased over the past few years; **in 2014 we had 101 tour participants, in 2015 we had 143 participants, and in 2016 we set a new record with 180 participants.** We expect our 2017 tour's attendance to increase twofold and we hope you will join us for this wonderful experience.

WALK NORWICH: PHASE 2



The third walk in the Walk Norwich Trail system is “**The Norwich Freedom Trail.**” This trail will include Norwich notables such as David Ruggles, James L. Smith and the Jail Hill National Register Historic District, located adjacent to historic Downtown Norwich. Further, this Trail will emphasize Norwich's connection to President Lincoln during the Civil War. Norwich has many important natives during this period, such as the Acting Vice President of the United States – Lafayette Foster, and Governor William Buckingham. There are also significant

places, such as the historic Yantic Cemetery where many Civil War soldiers are buried, and the Wauregan Hotel, where Lincoln visited.

The fourth walk, “**The Millionaires’ Triangle**” discovers the Industrial Era and the Gilded Age in Norwich. At one time, Norwich had more millionaires per capita than any other city in the country. The rich and famous of the era, included William Slater, Leonard Ballou, and Henry Bill. Many of the millionaires’ homes are still in existence and are all conveniently located near Slater Memorial Museum and the Chelsea Parade National Register Historic District. This effort will include connectivity to the various mill village neighborhoods in the in the city (Greenville, Occum, Taftville, and Yantic) along with the stories of millwork during that period.



Steve & Jon from NPW installing Walk Norwich Signs Spring 2016

This project will utilize 21st Century technology to reach a broad audience. Each historic site located on “The Norwich Freedom Trail” and “Norwich Millionaires’ Triangle” will be accessible on walknorwich.org. Visitors and residents can use self-guided trail brochures or their mobile device in order to take the tours. The information on the trail will include information about the sites, the people who impacted those sites and Norwich’s contribution to the Abolitionist Movement, Civil War and the Industrial Revolution.

WHAT’S NEXT FOR 2017?

During the past year, the Norwich Historical Society developed a five-year strategic plan to ensure that NHS will be a dynamic, healthy organization that is recognized as an area leader for history and heritage tourism.

Our Peer Advisor Network consultant facilitated the process, and using stakeholder’s surveys, the NHS was able to identify specific areas of growth such as programming, exhibits, collaborations, marketing, and branding, which will all increase NHS’s visibility. The vision for NHS includes activities that will promote community engagement through greater historical and cultural understanding of Norwich’s diverse past. NHS established a variety of key initiatives and strategies such as:

- 1. Education and Information through Community Engagement** – NHS will help share and preserve Norwich’s rich history through education, information, and advocacy.
- 2. Visible Cultural Leader** – NHS will be known and recognized throughout the city as a heritage and tourism leader whose efforts help to celebrate local history while bringing people and organizations together.

Norwich Historical Society 2017 Initiatives:

- Historical reenactments on the Norwichtown Green on October 1, 2017
- Walk Norwich: Norwich Freedom Trail & Millionaires' Triangle Self-Guided Trails
- Walktober 2017 & Second Saturday Tours 2017

Norwich Heritage and Regional Visitors' Center:

- Hosted Tom Callinan, Connecticut's First State Troubadour, on CT Open House Day on June 10, 2017
- The 2017 Summer Internship Program hosted 5 student interns researching a variety of topics including Ponemah Mill, Governor William Buckingham and Lafayette Foster. Students researched and wrote an article and presented their research to the public.
- Ghost Tours of the Colonial Burial Ground on October 27, 2017

Other Initiatives:

- Developed maps of Heritage and Cultural Sites in Norwich
- Restore the circa 1789 East District Schoolhouse in partnership with the City of Norwich
- Collaborating with the City of Norwich and the Mohegan Tribe as members of the Uncas Leap Steering Committee on the Uncas Leap Heritage Area
- Collaborating with the United Community and Family Services (UCFS) to restore the Governor Samuel Huntington Mansion in Norwichtown
- Collaborating with the City Historian and Senator Osten to restore Connecticut's Civil War Governor, William A. Buckingham's, historic home in downtown Norwich

TO SUM UP

Overall, the Norwich Historical Society believes it was a successful tourist season. Visitors departed from the Center with knowledge about the heritage of our community and with a smile thanks to our upbeat team of volunteers. Visitors enjoyed multiple events at the Visitors' Center and NHS helped support other events on the Norwichtown Green. Yet, we still have a lot more work to do. We need the City Council's support in order to make Norwich a tourist destination, improve the quality of life for our residents and attract new businesses.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **VISIT** the Norwich Heritage and Regional Visitors' Center and view the Discover Norwich exhibit
- **GO** on a Second Saturday or Walktober Walk
- **CHECK OUT** walknorwich.org and take a self guided tour
- **BECOME** a member of the Norwich Historical Society, Leffingwell House Museum and Slater Memorial Museum

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS



The Norwich Heritage and Regional Visitors' Center could not have operated without a dedicated group of volunteers for the 2016 season:

Doug Barlow, Faye Ringel, Linda Lamothe, Karen Cook, Mary Jones, Susan Gladue, Erin & Eric Beit, Julie Menders, Ron & Polly Miner, Pamela Hall, Damien Cregeau, Dave Oat, Dennis Guillemette, Bill Sullivan, Rosemary Southworth and Cal Edgar.

Thank you to our 2016 volunteers and NHS Board members!

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

Regan Miner

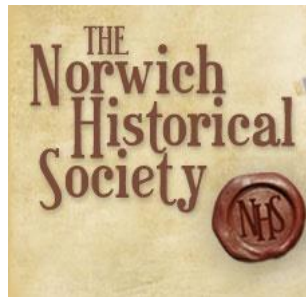
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