



# HERITAGE RESOURCE GUIDE

Norwich, Connecticut

2017-2018

**The Norwich Historical Society**

**307 Main Street Norwich, CT 06360**

**[www.norwichhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.norwichhistoricalsociety.org)**

## OVERVIEW

This document is intended to accomplish several things.

1. First, it is a resource for “all things Heritage “in Norwich. The document begins with a brief history of Norwich and highlights some notable Norwich natives.
2. It contains a brief list of the significant heritage sites in Norwich spanning four centuries.
3. It describes Norwich’s unique historic neighborhoods and why historic preservation matters.
4. It clarifies the difference between a Local Historic District (Norwich has two) and a National Register Historic District (Norwich has twelve!).
5. It describes the importance of Heritage Tourism and how that is an important component of any economic development effort.
6. It describes all of the groups and organizations working with Norwich’s rich heritage, the Norwich Historical Society being the lead agency.
7. Also, this document lists the accomplishments of the Norwich Historical Society for 2017 and our planned events for 2018. These accomplishments over the past three years include securing funding for restoration work and overseeing restoration work on several significant historic buildings.

## CONCLUSION

The City of Norwich has enough sites and stories to be a heritage destination. The Norwich Historical Society would like the City to start thinking of itself as a heritage tourism destination and work with the various heritage groups on packaging these stories properly for visitors.

The Norwich Historical Society is proud of our work and we take our role of Norwich’s lead heritage organization very seriously. We ask that you keep us in mind when issues arise concerning Norwich’s heritage or historic buildings. And, we thank you for all of the support we have received.

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## HISTORY OF NORWICH



The City of Norwich was founded in 1659 and the friendship formed with the local Mohegan Tribe allowed the Norwich settlers to purchase a tract of land 9 miles square. Norwich is filled with significant historical places relating to the Mohegan Tribe such as Uncas Leap, the Mohegan Burial Ground, and the Miantonomo Monument is still extant today; hidden gems of the untold stories of how the city of Norwich was formed.



Norwich was one of the largest cities during the eighteenth century and was a center of wealth, commerce and influence. Norwich is home to important figures that played a role in the Revolutionary War such as Christopher Leffingwell – a purveyor of provisions for the Continental Army; Samuel Huntington – signer of the Declaration of Independence, and, Benedict Arnold – our country's most infamous traitor, who was a talented commander in the Continental Army until 1779.



Norwich has a culturally diverse population; David Ruggles, an African American from Norwich, participated in the Underground Railroad and the Jail Hill National Historic District was home to many notable African Americans. During the Industrial Era, the mills in Greeneville and Taftville attracted many immigrant laborers who stayed and made Norwich home. The impressive Ponemah Mill towers over the village of Taftville and is a testament to Norwich's significant impact on the textile industry.



Today, The City of Norwich is the largest city in Eastern, CT with over 40,000 residents and its rich and diverse history showcases its impact and contribution to the formation of the United States of America.

## FAMOUS NORWICH RESIDENTS



**Major John Mason** was one of the founders of Norwich. He and his son-in-law, **Reverend James Fitch**, led 33 other founding families from Saybrook to Norwich. In addition to founding Norwich, Mason helped found the town of Windsor. John Mason was an ally of **Sachem Uncas** of the Mohegan Tribe. Major Mason is known as the colonists' Commander during the wars between and among the native tribes and European settlers and is infamously known for commanding the massacre on the Pequot Tribe in 1637. In addition, he became Deputy Governor of Connecticut. He died in Norwich in 1672. (Image courtesy of the Mohegan Tribe)



**Benedict Arnold** was born in Norwich and was a prominent General in the Revolutionary War infamous for defecting to the British. However, before switching sides, Arnold was military commander who captured Fort Ticonderoga in 1775, engaged the British in the nation's first naval skirmish during the Battle of Valcour Island in 1776 and was instrumental in the American victory at Saratoga in 1777. Arnold's complicated legacy is one of hero and traitor.



**Samuel Huntington** practiced law in Norwich and served as a delegate to the Continental Congress. Huntington was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation. In 1779, he was elected the first President of the Continental Congress in Congress Assembled; which made him the first president of the United States under the Articles of Confederation. Huntington's other esteemed titles include Connecticut State Chief Justice and 18th Governor of Connecticut. Image: Samuel Huntington (1731-1796), c. 1783, oil on canvas by Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827), courtesy of the Samuel Huntington Trust. The First President of the United States under the Articles of the Confederacy.



**Lydia Huntley Sigourney**, born in Norwich, was a famous 19th century poet known as the "Sweet Singer of Hartford." While living in Norwich, Lydia opened a school for girls in 1812, but moved her school to Hartford in 1814. Lydia often used her upbringing in Norwich as inspiration for her poetry. Her prolific portfolio included works of history, moral and religious poetry, and corresponded with famous authors including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ultimately earning a reputation that many aspiring authors sought out and respected. Image: Lydia Huntley Sigourney photographed by Matthew Brady.

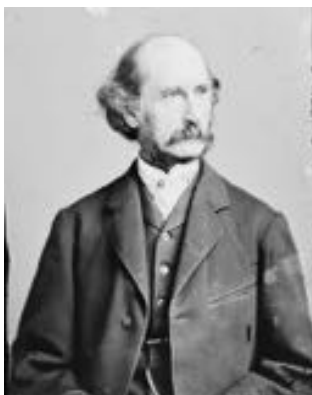




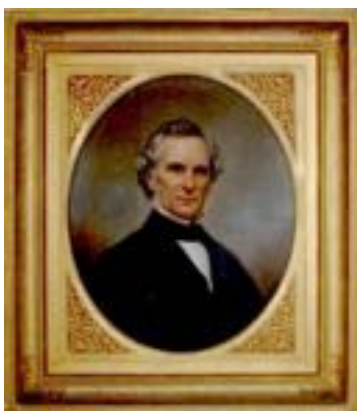
**Sarah Harris** was a young African American girl from the Jail Hill section of Norwich and attended Prudence Crandall's "School for Young Ladies and Little Misses of Color" in Canterbury. Sarah was Crandall's first student. The school was forced to close in 1834. Image courtesy of Prudence Crandall Museum Department of Economic and Community Development.



**David Ruggles** was an abolitionist from Norwich who participated in the Underground Railroad. He was named Secretary of the New York Vigilance Society, also known as the Underground Railroad, in New York.



**Lafayette Foster** was the Senate Pro-tempore, and upon Lincoln's assassination, Foster became the acting Vice President of the United States. If the assassination attempts on other government officials had continued as planned, Foster would have become President of the United States. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.



**Governor William Buckingham** was Connecticut's Civil War Governor. He was a close ally of Lincoln and oversaw the provisions of supplies for Connecticut's troops. Image Governor William Buckingham (1804-1875), oil on canvas, by Alexander H. Emmons (1816-1884), 1875, courtesy of the First Congregationalist Church of Lebanon.



**Frances Manwaring Caulkins** was a schoolteacher who used her writing skills to craft the histories of Norwich and New London. Image courtesy of the New London County Historical Society.



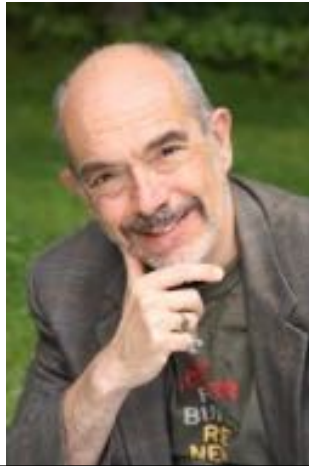
**Horace Smith & Daniel Wesson:** In 1853, the firm of Smith & Wesson developed the first repeating rifle. Contributed to Norwich gun manufacturing. Norwich Arms Company would dominate the gun industry in the Civil War.



**Edith Carow Roosevelt**, born in Norwich, was the second wife of President Theodore Roosevelt; she was First Lady from 1901-1909.



**Harry Rossoll**, born in Norwich, was the artist who created Smoky Bear.



**Wally Lamb** is a nationally renowned author of several bestselling books. Prior to his fame as an author, Lamb taught creative writing at NFA. Image courtesy of Wally Lamb.



**Edwin H. Land**, from Norwich, was the inventor of the Polaroid Camera.



President **Howard Taft** visiting Norwich 1909

## *Presidential Connections*

President **John Adams** and **Abigail Adams** dined at Jesse Brown's tavern (77 East Town Street) on the Norwichtown Green in 1797 and were greeted by a 16-federal gun salute.

The **Marquis de Lafayette** and his soldiers camped on the Norwichtown Green in 1778.

**Jean Pierre Boyer**, later first President of the Republic of Haiti, was captured and stayed with the Manning family in Norwichtown from 1800-1801.

**George Washington** dined in Jedediah Huntington's house, stayed overnight in Jabez Huntington's house, and gathered supplies at the Leffingwell House Museum in 1776.

President **Millard Fillmore** and President **Grover Cleveland** can trace their ancestry back to Norwich.

In 1909, **President Howard Taft** came to visit the City of Norwich during its 250th birthday celebrations. Other presidents that visited Norwich are: **Washington, Adams, Jackson, Lincoln, Grant, Truman, Nixon and Clinton.**

## NORWICH HERITAGE SITES



**Uncas Leap**  
**196-200 Yantic Street**

Acquired by the City of Norwich in 2010, the area has historical significance to the community and has remained a sacred part of Mohegan Tribe history since 1643. The 1.2-acre landmark along the Yantic River is the site of the culmination of the Battle of Great Plains between the Mohegan and Narragansett Tribes. Additionally, the Yantic River was an important source of power for Norwich's early industry. John Elderkin built the first gristmill at the Falls in the 1660s and the site has continued to have a rich industrial history.



**Uncas Monument**  
**Sachem Street**

Despite the fact that the exact resting place of Sachem Uncas is unknown, the Uncas Monument honors Uncas' final resting place. The monument was dedicated in 1833 by President Andrew Jackson. Buffalo Bill Cody visited the monument in 1907.



**Royal Mohegan Burying Grounds**  
**Washington & Sachem Streets**

The Native Mohegan Tribe brought their dead up the Yantic River via boat and carried them up a ravine into the burial ground. Originally, Sachem Uncas asked the English settlers that 16 acres be left in perpetuity for the Mohegans to continue their burial practices. However, over time, the 16 acres shrunk and by 1870, less than 1/8 of an acre remained. The Masonic Temple was built over the burial grounds and in 2006 the Mohegan Tribe purchased the land, demolished the temple and created a monument to honor their deceased ancestors.





### **Miantonomo Monument Elijah Street**

After Miantonomo was captured following the Narraganset defeat at the Battle of Great Plains, he was taken to Hartford by the Mohegans to decide his fate. Ultimately, the English decided the Mohegans may execute Miantonomo on Native American territory, away from English towns. English settlers, including John Mason, traveled with Sachem Uncas to see the execution carried out. A monument in the Greeneville section of Norwich was erected by the Mohegan Tribe in honor of their fallen enemy.



### **Post and Gager Cemetery Lee Avenue**

The Post and Gager Cemetery was established in 1661 as Norwich's first cemetery. It is known as the Founders Cemetery because most all of the original 35 founders and their families are buried here. There are no stones, but there is a monument honoring the founders and their families.



### **Norwichtown Colonial Burying Ground East Town Street & Old Cemetery Lane**

A second burial ground was established in 1700 to fulfill the needs of the growing community. The gates at the entrance of the burial ground are from the Salisbury Mines in Litchfield, CT which produced the iron for the anchors of the Revolutionary War Frigate *Constitution* or "Old Ironsides." The impressive tomb of Samuel Huntington is in the Colonial Burial Grounds as is a monument for twenty French soldiers who died in Norwich.

## Oak Street Cemetery

37 Oat Street



The Oat Street Cemetery, sometimes referred to as the City Cemetery, was established in 1755 and is roughly an acre and a half. The colonial section of the cemetery is located at the southern end near Acadia Street. Notable individuals buried in the cemetery include Captain Robert Niles.

In October of 1777, fellow Norwich compatriot, Benedict Arnold, helped secure a decisive victory over the British at the Battle of Saratoga. When news of the victory reached Paris in December, the French formally allied with the Americans. The French signed two treaties and sent them to America to be ratified by Congress. Niles, commander of the *Spy*, was charged with carrying the ratified treaties back to France. He evaded the British fleet and arrived safely in France. There were six copies of the treaty dispatched by other vessels, but Niles and the *Spy* were the only ones to successfully reach their destination. France's entry into the war ultimately secured an American victory in 1781 at the Battle of Yorktown.



## Leffingwell House Museum

348 Washington Street

Steven Backus built a two-room building in 1675 and in 1701 Lt. Thomas Leffingwell bought the home and opened it as an inn. During the Revolutionary War period, industrialist Christopher Leffingwell owned the tavern. Leffingwell was an invaluable supplier of provisions to the Continental Army and George Washington was said to have worked on some paperwork at the Leffingwell Inn. The Leffingwell House Museum was moved to its present location in 1957 to make way for the Route 2 connector.



## Yantic Cemetery

68 Lafayette Street

The Yantic Cemetery is named after the Yantic River, which flows adjacent to the cemetery. The Victorian park like setting was comforting and inviting to grieving families. Many of Norwich's rich and famous such as John Fox Slater and Lafayette Foster are buried in the cemetery. In addition, many Civil War soldiers, including the prisoners from Andersonville, are interred here. David Ruggles is buried here in an unmarked grave.





### **Slater Memorial Museum** **108 Crescent Street**

John Fox Slater was a renowned industrialist and was president of the Ponemah Mills in Taftville. Slater is a descendent of Samuel Slater who helped jump start America's Industrial Revolution by bringing plans of manufacturing equipment from England. John Fox Slater donated a substantial sum to educate "freed slaves" in the south and over 36 colleges benefited from his donation. Slater's son, William A. Slater, designed the Romanesque style Slater Memorial Museum in 1886 in honor of his father. The museum houses numerous ancient Greek and Roman plaster casts in addition to an extensive Asian art collection and historic Norwich paintings.



### **Lowthorpe Meadows** **400 Washington Street**

The name "Lowthorpe" is the English equivalent of "Lathrop." The 18-acre meadow was deeded to the town of Norwich in 1907 by the Gilman sisters with the stipulation it "be kept as free open space for the public." According to an account published in 1659, it was "a dark and dolorous swamp...the haunt of wolves and venomous serpents, from whence it is said, often at nightfall, low howling issued, and phosphorescent lights were seen, vary fearful and appalling to the early planters." Today, it's a beautiful place for a delightful nature walk.



### **Norwich Harbor** **1 American Wharf**

The Yantic, Shetucket and Thames Rivers converge in the Norwich Harbor. In 1694, the public landing was built to allow large merchant vessels to dock in the harbor. "The Landing" became known as Chelsea and the harbor became a thriving seaport and shipbuilding center. Many Norwich men commanded ships of the Continental Navy and in 1776 Congress authorized the construction of the *Confederacy*, 36-gun frigate. Built at Confederacy Point on the Thames by both Native American and Colonial workers, the ship was named in 1778 for the confederation of thirteen states.

# NORWICH'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

## Norwichtown



*Designations:* Norwichtown Local Historic District and Norwichtown National Register Historic District

*Features:* Lowthorpe Meadows, Norwichtown Green and the Colonial Burying Ground

Norwichtown was the first area of English settlement in the 1600s. The land was purchased from the Mohegans, and the town was built around the green in the seventeenth century. The Norwichtown Green contains a concentration of colonial and Victorian era houses, shops, schools and a church.



## Bean Hill

*Designations:* Bean Hill National Register Historic District

*Features:* Bean Hill Green

Bean Hill, along with Norwichtown, is one of the oldest sections of Norwich. Surrounding the Bean Hill Green are homes dating from the 1700 to early 1800s. In the colonial period, this area was home to houses, shops and industrial properties. David Ruggles and Benedict Arnold's mother grew up on Bean Hill.



## Chelsea Parade

*Designations:* Chelsea Parade Historic National Register Historic District

*Features:* Norwich Free Academy, Slater Memorial Museum, Chelsea Parade Green, Italian Heritage Monument, Royal Mohegan Burying Ground, Christ Episcopal Church, Park Congregational Church, and the Perkins-Rockwell House

Known as a "parade" for military displays, Chelsea Parade is surrounded by Victorian era homes owned by the Norwich elites of the Gilded Age.





## Little Plain

*Designations:* Little Plain Local Historic District and Little Plain National Register Historic District

*Features:* Little Plain Park, Civil War Memorial to the 26<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Regiment, D.A.R. Granite Fountain, and the Jacob DeWitt House

Little Plain was formed as a residential neighborhood for the merchant class when the City was a lucrative Revolutionary-era shipping center. The houses surrounding the little triangle green date to the 1700s and 1800s and include examples of Georgian, Greek Revival and Federal architectural styles.

## Jail Hill



*Designations:* Jail Hill National Register Historic District

*Features:* Eliza Huntington Memorial Home

Jail Hill is significant as a neighborhood for working class African Americans. There are well preserved examples of Victorian architecture in the district. Originally a strategic fort of the Mohegan Tribe, Jail Hill was named for the county jail built on top of the hill in 1829. School Street had a schoolhouse and the former Norwich Female Academy. Sarah Harris lived on Jail Hill.

## Laurel Hill



*Designations:* Laurel Hill National Register Historic District & the Norwich Hospital National Register District

*Features:* American Thermos Bottle Company & Norwich & Worcester Railroad Tracks

Laurel Hill was named for the mountain laurel that still grows today. Originally part of Preston, Laurel Hill was an undeveloped vegetated area for sheep to graze in the 1700s. Later, it became a residential center for the middle and upper class who worked in Downtown Norwich featuring Victorian architectural styles.



## Yantic Falls

*Designations:* Yantic Falls National Register Historic District

*Features:* Uncas Leap, Iron Pedestrian Bridge, & Falls Mill Condos

The area is naturally beautiful with Yantic Falls and has a deep connection to the local Mohegan Tribe. Additionally, the site has a rich industrial history with multiple examples of nineteenth century industrial architecture.

## Yantic



*Designations:* Yantic Woolen Company Mill National Register of Historic Places

*Features:* Yantic Manufacturing Company, Yantic Fire Engine No. 1 Company, Episcopal Church in Yantic & the Sunnyside Bridge

This former mill village is home to the first iron works in Norwich established by Elijah Backus in 1750 and later was home to the Yantic Manufacturing Company. On the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Norwich, President William Howard Taft drove across the bridge in a “celebratory parade.”

## Greeneville



*Designations:* Greeneville National Register Historic District

*Features:* Greeneville Dam

Named after William P. Greene, prominent industrialist and Mayor of Norwich, Greeneville was laid out in 1833 and is one of the oldest planned company towns in Norwich. Greeneville is a relatively intact nineteenth century mill village with many historic mill structures, railroad and trolley car sheds, and the oldest Roman Catholic church building in Eastern, Connecticut.



## Occum

*Designations:* Occum Hydroelectric Mill and Dam National Register of Historic Places

*Features:* Occum Fire Department & Red McKeon Park

Named for Samson Occum, a prominent Mohegan orator and Presbyterian Minister, Occum is another mill village located on the Shetucket River. Occum is home to the Occum Hydroelectric Mill and Dam. Many of the mill buildings have been demolished, but Occum still retains some of its workers' housing and has a small business and recreational area.

## Taftville



*Designations:* Taftville/Ponemah Mill National Register Historic District

*Features:* Ponemah Mills, Taftville Fire Dept No. 2, Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church and the Taftville Congregational Church.

The village of Taftville is an exquisite example of Norwich's lasting legacy as a nineteenth century manufacturing power. Ponemah Mill was at one time the largest cotton factory in the country and towers over the village's workers' housing.

## Downtown Norwich



*Designations:* Downtown Norwich National Register Historic District

*Features:* The Harbor, Norwich City Hall, William A. Buckingham House, the Wauregan, Otis Library, Reid & Hughes, Post Office, & Courthouse

Downtown Norwich has an impressive array of commercial, institutional and residential architectural styles spanning over 250 years. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Norwich was a thriving seaport; crops and livestock were traded for rum, sugar and molasses from the West Indies

at Chelsea Landing. Norwich was a major shipbuilding center and provided supplies, munitions and soldiers during the American Revolution. By 1774, Norwich was the twelfth largest city in the colonies. There are a few examples of early 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture, but most of the architecture in Downtown is from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.



# INDIVIDUAL LISTINGS ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

## NORWICHTOWN

- Bradford- Huntington House, 16 Huntington Lane
- Gardner- Carpenter House, 55 East Town Street
- Joseph Carpenter Silversmith Shop, 71 East Town Street
- Capt. Richard Charlton House, 12 Mediterranean Lane
- East District Schoolhouse, 365 Washington Street
- Gen. Jedediah Huntington House, 23 East Town Street
- Col. Joshua Huntington House, 11 Huntington Lane
- Gov. Samuel Huntington House, 34 East Town Street
- Dr. Joshua Lathrop House, 377 Washington Street
- Dr. Daniel Lathrop Schoolhouse, 69 East Town Street
- Leffingwell Inn 348 Washington Street
- Dr. Philip Turner House, 29 West Town Street



Joseph Carpenter Shop c.1772 (left)  
Lathrop Schoolhouse c.1783 (right)

## CHELSEA PARADE

- Nathaniel Backus House, 44 Rockwell Street
- Converse House & Barn, 185 Washington Street
- Perkins-Rockwell House 42 Rockwell Street
- Broad Street School, 100 Broad Street

## LAUREL HILL

- American Thermos Bottle Company Laurel Hill Plant
- Norwich State Hospital



American Thermos, c.1912

## YANTIC

- Yantic Woolen Company Mill

## OCCUM

- Occum Hydroelectric Mill & Dam

## DOWNTOWN

- William A. Buckingham Memorial, 307 Main Street
- Carroll Building, 9-15 Main Street & 14-20 Water Street
- Norwich City Hall, 100 Broadway
- Telephone Exchange Building, 23 Union Street
- United States Post Office, 340 Main Street



Gov. William Buckingham's House c.1847



## WHY DOES HISTORIC PRESERVATION MATTER?

Historic structures contribute to the **identity of a community** and offer a profound **sense of place**; if the historic structure representing the community's identity is no longer there, then the sense of place is lost. As a result of urban renewal, we've lost countless historic treasures in the belief that new is better. It is our duty as a society to preserve significant historic sites or else we lose them.

Historic Preservation contributes to **economic development** in the sense that historic structures are transformed from defunct structures into a space for **adaptive reuse**. In addition, **heritage tourism** is a steadily growing industry and heritage tourists travel specifically to museums or historic sites. Heritage tourists often have an interest in history and are more likely to stay in their destinations longer and **spend vital tourist's dollars in the community**.

In order to ensure the longevity of our precious natural resources, it is more **environmentally sustainable** to reuse a historic structure rather than rebuild a new building. It extracts less energy from the environment and emits less carbon contributing to harmful greenhouse gases.

### Six Practical Reasons to Save Old Buildings:

1. Old Buildings have Intrinsic Value
2. When you tear down an old building you never know what's being destroyed
3. New businesses prefer old buildings
4. Old buildings attract people
5. Old buildings are a reminder of a city's culture and complexity
6. Regret only goes one way

#### **Source:**

*Rocchi, Julia. "Six Practical Reasons to Save Old Buildings." National Trust for Historic Preservation. Accessed December 19, 2017. <https://savingplaces.org/stories/six-reasons-save-old-buildings#.WjkjK99Ks2w>.*

## *Important Definitions*

**National Register of Historic Places:** Maintained by the National Park Service, the National Register of Historic Places is an inventory of significant buildings and sites recognized for their historic, architectural, or cultural significance. Designation includes individual properties and historic districts. **10 historic districts and 26 individual sites in Norwich are listed on the National Register.** While this is an honorary listing, review is required if changes involve federal funding, licensing or permits.

**Local Historic District:** The Connecticut General Assembly gives towns the authority to establish locally designated historic districts and individual historic properties for which visible exterior architectural changes are reviewed by a local historic district commission. This designation is the most restrictive and offers the most protection for areas or buildings of historic and architectural significance. **Norwich has two Local Historic Districts: Norwichtown and Little Plain.** Local Historic Districts are not to be confused with National Register Districts; although both are automatically listed on the State Register of Historic Places, they are structured and reviewed differently.

**Historic District Commission:** The Norwich Historical Society is NOT the Norwich Historic District Commission. They are two separate entities. The primary function of the Historic District Commission is to review the appropriateness of any physical alterations to the exterior of a historic structure, construction of a new structure, or demolition of an existing structure that is visible from a public way in the local historic district. Typical work that requires such review includes: replacement of windows or doors, siding, addition of decks, garages, fences or outbuildings. Ordinary repairs and maintenance and paint colors are not subject to review. **Norwich has a Historic District Commission to regulate the Little Plains and Norwichtown Local Historic District.** The Norwich Historic District Commission has authority set forth by Ordinance 439 adopted 10/2/67. The City Council appoints five members to five-year terms and three alternates to two-year terms beginning on January 1.

**State Register of Historic Places:** The State Register of Historic Places is the official listing of properties formally recognized for their importance to the historical development of Connecticut. This is an honorary listing only. All properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and all Local Historic Districts are automatically included on the State Register.

**Delay of Demolition Ordinance:** The State of Connecticut has enabling legislation that allows towns to impose a waiting period (not more than 180 days) before granting a demolition permit. This waiting period allows interested parties to explore alternatives for demolition. The intent is not to limit or prevent demolition, but rather to provide “a window of opportunity for preservation.” The Norwich demolition ordinance requires that notice be published at least 60 days before the issuance of a demolition permit for buildings and structures located within historic districts or individually listed on or nominated for the National Register of Historic Places.

**Historic Overlay Zoning:** An historic overlay zone is a mapped zone that imposes a set of requirements in addition to those of the underlying zoning district in an area considered worthy of preservation because of its architectural, cultural or historic significance. This makes it possible to establish historic district review by means of a zoning ordinance rather than an independent process such as establishing a Local Historic District. The property is simultaneously in two zones and the land may be developed only under the conditions and requirements of both. Overlay zones typically are applied when there is a special public interest in a particular area.

**Village District:** The Village District Act is another zoning tool designed to protect a community’s character and historic development patterns. Connecticut PA 98-116 allows municipal zoning commissions to create Village Districts to preserve historic and scenic resources. The scope of the Village District is a little broader than that of a Local Historic District designation, as it can require a review of landscaping, road design, maintenance of public views, and all new construction and major reconstruction. A Village District is established by a local zoning ordinance.

**Downtown Neighborhood Revitalization Zone:** Pursuant to the State of Connecticut Public Act 95-340, Norwich has adopted a strategic plan for the Downtown Neighborhood Revitalization Zone and the Greeneville Revitalization Zone. The NRZ committees are directed to submit a report on the implementation of the strategic plan to the City Manager, City Council, and Secretary of the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management at intervals of six months at the first year of adoption and annually thereafter. The Downtown NRZ supports the activities of downtown businesses and the Chelsea Arts Districts.

**Certified Local Government:** The Certified Local Government Program (CLG) is a preservation partnership between local, state and national governments designed to encourage historic preservation at the grassroots level. Certification enables the CLG community to become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program through the state preservation division and provides the ability to tap into partnerships with the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, Preserve America, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Main Street Center. It also permits access to federal funding set aside by Connecticut for the sole use of CLGs. **Norwich is a CLG and is eligible for Historic Preservation Enhancement Grants and Supplemental Certified Local Government Grants through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).**

**Preserve America Communities:** This program recognizes and designates communities, including neighborhoods in large cities, that protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic and community revitalization and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs. Benefits of designation include eligibility to apply for Preserve America grants. These federal monies are intended to help communities develop sustainable resource management strategies and sound business practices for the continued preservation and use of heritage assets.

**Federal Tax Credits for Historic Properties:** The Tax Code of 1986 permits owners of depreciable residential, commercial and industrial buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places to elect a 20% investment tax credit in conjunction with the certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures. In Connecticut, the use of federal tax credits for historic rehabilitation projects has resulted in several thousand units of housing, through the upgrading of substandard buildings or the creation of new residential units by conversion of school, factory, warehouse, church, retail, apartments hotel, office, and other buildings.

20% tax credits for the certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures and is available for properties rehabilitated for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential properties. **(Ponemah Mills successfully utilized this program.)** It is not available for properties used as the owner's private residence.

10% tax credits for the rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936.

**State Tax Credits for Historic Properties:** The CT Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program (C.G.S. Sec. 10-416c) establishes a 25% tax credit on the Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures associated with the rehabilitation of a Certified Historic Structure for either 1) residential use of five units or more, 2) mixed residential and nonresidential use or 3) nonresidential use consistent with the historic character of such property or the district in which such property is located. An additional credit is available for projects that include affordable housing as provided in section 8-39a of the general statutes. For more information about this program, please visit: <http://www.cultureandtourism.org/cct/cwp/view.asp?a=3933&q=430786> (Definition acquired from the Department of Economic and Community Development Office of Culture and Tourism)

The National Council on Public History defines **Public History** as the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world. In this sense, it is history that is applied to real-world issues.

*These definitions were provided by the following source: Carley, Rachel. "Norwich, Connecticut Historic Neighborhoods." The Norwich Historical Society, 2008.*

## NORWICH PRESERVATION EXAMPLES

The City of Norwich cares for the preservation of its historic assets. The following examples are past, in progress, and future examples of historic preservation projects in Norwich.

### *Past*



#### ***City Hall***

***100 Broadway***

*(Image courtesy of the City of Norwich)*

Norwich City Hall was built between 1870-1873 and is in the Second Empire Style. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 22, 1983. The building is part of the Downtown Norwich Historic District. The City of Norwich has been a good steward of the building and has restored the floors to their original character.



#### ***The Wauregan***

***25 Broadway***

*(Image courtesy of the Norwich Heritage Trust)*

The Wauregan opened in 1855 and was considered the finest hotel between Boston and New York; Abraham Lincoln stayed in the hotel while campaigning for President. In the 1990s, the building was vacant and threatened with demolition. Thanks to Historic Tax Credits, the Wauregan was able to be rehabilitated in 2006 with 70 mixed-income apartments and four retail spaces. The Wauregan is located in the Downtown Norwich Historic District.



#### ***The Dr. Daniel Lathrop Schoolhouse***

***69 East Town Street***

In 2015, the Norwich Historical Society leased the Dr. Daniel Lathrop Schoolhouse from the City of Norwich for \$1.00 a year. NHS rehabilitated the Lathrop Schoolhouse by restoring the windows, installing museum quality lighting and installing an energy efficient HVAC system. Today, the Dr. Daniel Lathrop Schoolhouse is the Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors' Center. The building is in the Norwichtown Historic District.



## *In Progress*



***The Ponemah Mill***  
***607 Norwich Ave***

OneKey LLC is rehabilitating the mammoth Ponemah Mills over a series of phases as a piece of history redesigned for modern luxury living. Now offering one, two, and three-bedroom luxury apartment homes, on the banks of the Shetucket River. OneKey LLC was able to successfully rehabilitated the mill thanks to Federal and State Historic Tax Credits. Ponemah Mills is located in the Taftville/Ponemah Mill National Register Historic District.



***Samuel Huntington Mansion***  
***34 East Town Street***

Last year, United Community & Family Services (UCFS) asked the Norwich Historical Society to assist them with implementing historically correct energy upgrades to their headquarters, the c. 1769 landmark Governor Samuel Huntington House. Currently, Historical Architects and Historic Preservation professionals are working with UCFS to establish historically correct energy upgrades. The building is located in the Norwichtown Historic District.



***Reid & Hughes***  
***193-201 Main Street***  
*(Image courtesy of the Norwich Heritage Trust)*

On October 3, 2016 the Norwich City Council voted to spend up to \$800,000 to demolish the Reid and Hughes building. The Reid and Hughes is an historic structure circa 1869/1898 with a cast iron façade located on Main Street near Franklin Square in the Downtown Norwich Historic District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Upon intervention through the State Historic Preservation Office, the City of Norwich is working with the Women's Institute to rehabilitate the building for apartments and shops on the first level.



***East District Schoolhouse  
365 Washington Street***

In 2017, Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) awarded the Norwich Historical Society \$38,951 to support efforts to restore the East District Schoolhouse located in the Norwichtown Historic District on Washington Street. The funding from NPU was made available through the State of Connecticut's Neighborhood Assistance Act, a tax credit program which allows organizations to make contributions to eligible non-profit agencies in lieu of paying a portion of their State tax bill. Since our announcement, we've worked with Norwich Public Works and a host of Historic Preservation professionals to come up with a plan for the building. The plan is to stabilize the building, restore the windows and create a drain to prevent water from entering the space and causing mold. The building is in the Norwichtown Historic District.

***Future***

***William A. Buckingham Memorial  
307 Main Street***



The William A. Buckingham House, also known as Buckingham Memorial Hall, is a historic house located in the Downtown Norwich Historic District at 307 Main Street. It is a 2-1/2 story brick structure, with a main block three bays wide, topped by a hip roof with a steep gable above the main entrance. It was built in 1847 by William A. Buckingham, whose political career included terms as mayor of Norwich and Governor of Connecticut during the American Civil War. Buckingham is known to have had both Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant as guests. The Norwich Historical Society was recently awarded over \$100,000.00 for energy repairs to the building.

**There are still many more important historic structures that should be preserved and restored in Norwich. We value the City of Norwich's appreciation of our heritage and look forward to promoting, preserving and protecting Norwich's heritage assets together.**

## 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 2017 ECONOMIC IMPACT IN NORWICH, CT

**Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors' Center Economic Impact:** \$24,882.00- \$70,785.00

**Walktober's Economic Impact:** \$79,344.00 - \$225,720.00

**Second Saturday Walking Tour's Economic Impact:** \$12,760.00 - \$36,300.00

**Leffingwell House Museum's Economic Impact:** \$74,588.00- \$212,190.00

**Slater Memorial Museum's Economic Impact:** \$696,000.00 - \$1,980,000.00

### TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT IN NORWICH, CT

**\$887,574.00 - \$2,524,995.00**

## STATS FROM OTHER NORWICH DESTINATIONS

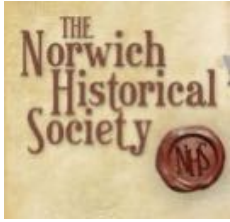
### Slater Memorial Museum

January- December 2017: **12,000 visitors**

### Leffingwell House Museum

April – October 2017: **1,286 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 (2017)

- In January of 2017, Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) awarded the Norwich Historical Society \$38,951 to support efforts to restore the East District Schoolhouse on Washington Street in Norwichtown. The funding from NPU was made available through the State of Connecticut's Neighborhood Assistance Act, a tax credit program. Since our announcement, we've worked with Norwich Public Works and a host of Historic Preservation professionals to come up with a plan for the building.
- NHS participates as a member of the Uncas Leap Steering Committee which is a collaboration of representatives from the City of Norwich, the Mohegan Tribe, NHS and area residents and has met consistently for the past twelve years about the project. The Master Planning process will be broken up into phases and construction could start on the first phase in the Spring of 2018.
- Last year, United Community & Family Services (UCFS) asked the Norwich Historical Society to assist them with implementing historically correct energy upgrades to their headquarters, the c. 1769 landmark Governor Samuel Huntington House. Currently, Historical Architects and Historic Preservation professionals are working with UCFS to establish historically correct energy upgrades.
- Our 2017 Annual Meeting departed from our traditional style of program and featured three speakers discussing the influence of mental health on Norwich's history.
- In May, we were honored to host New York Times Best Selling Author Nathaniel Philbrick while he was promoting his newest book, *Valiant Ambition: George Washington, Benedict Arnold, and the Fate of the American Revolution*.
- This summer at the Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors' Center, we had Joceline, a SYEP student worker, interns Haley and Madelyn and volunteers Serena and Brianna working on a number of research projects including an article about a topic in Norwich's history, working on exhibits and creating interpretive text panels. Additionally, they all created interesting Facebook posts about historical facts from Norwich. At the end of the summer, Madelyn and Haley presented their projects to the public.
- 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 2017.
- Sponsored the 2017 Second Saturday Walking Tour Series. Walks included: Ye Olde Antient Burial Ground, Walking in a Traitor's Footsteps: The Benedict Arnold Trail and the Norwich Millionaires' Triangle. Each walk had 30-100 participants from Norwich and around the region.



## THE NORWICH HERITAGE GROUPS



In 2013, representatives from all the heritage-based organizations in Norwich met to find ways to collaborate. We 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.

**The Visitors' Center is located at 69 East Town Street and is open seasonally.**

## VISITOR DATA

Overall, from May - October 2017 **over 1,000 visitors** enjoyed the Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors' Center.

**Visitors came from regional towns such as:** *Manchester, Glastonbury, Wethersfield, Madison, Enfield, Coventry, Plainfield, South Windsor, Vernon, Stonington, and the Greater Norwich Area.*

**In addition, visitors from out of state came from:** *Maine, Colorado, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Oregon, Ohio, Florida, Washington, Wisconsin, Virginia, California, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Washington D.C., New Hampshire, Louisiana, and the country of Australia*

### 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
- Driving or walking by

### 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 10, 2017; hosted Tom Callinan, the State's First Troubadour*
- *History Day on the Norwichtown Green on October 1, 2017*
- *The Norwich Historical Society's Annual Ghost Tour & distributed candy on Halloween Evening 2017*



**Top Left:** CT Open House Day June 2017

**Bottom Left:** History Day on the Norwichtown Green October 2017

**Right:** Author Nathaniel Philbrick with local reenactors May 2017



## 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 2017!

**Above:** Pastor Hugh James leads visitors through the Christ Episcopal Church on “A Surprising History of Christ Episcopal Church” Walktober Walk

**Above:** The Smiths lead visitors around Mohegan Park on the Walktober Walk – “Hike around Mohegan Park.”

## ANTIENT GHOSTS OF NORWICH



NHS hosts our annual Ghost tour in the Colonial Burial Ground on the Friday before Halloween where 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, reenactors interpret historic figures such as Hannah Arnold, Benedict Arnold, Rev. Benjamin Lord 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.** In 2017, we did advanced registration and had over 90 participants.

## WALK NORWICH TRAILS



**Walk Norwich** is a pedestrian advocacy movement in Norwich, Connecticut. The goal is to promote walking, request pedestrian improvements (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks) and to educate residents and guests about the ease of walking in and around Norwich. The objectives of the trails are to provide people with an interactive walking self-guided trail complete with trail marker signs, interpretive signs, and self-guided brochures. Visit [www.walknorwich.org](http://www.walknorwich.org) to learn more about the trails.

### OUR CURRENT TRAILS:



**The Uncas Leap Trail** features the Native Mohegan Tribe's rich history in southeastern Connecticut, including a legendary battle with the Narragansett Tribe, the tribe's friendly relationship with Norwich's early settlers (which close relationship exists today), and key sacred sites.



**The Heritage Walk** is a 2.8-mile roundtrip trail along the Yantic River connecting historic downtown Norwich CT to the remarkable Uncas Leap Heritage Area.



**The Benedict Arnold Walking Trail** features Norwich's infamous native son and discusses Norwich's rich colonial era history and significant figures from the Revolutionary War.



**Left:** Guided Benedict Arnold Trail led by NHS Consultant Regan Miner

**Top:** Guided Uncas Leap Tour by Bill Champagne President of NHS and Beth Regan of the Mohegan Tribe



## WALK NORWICH TRAILS: 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 city (Greeneville, 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.



## SLATER MEMORIAL MUSEUM



The Primary mission of the Slater Memorial Museum, since its founding in 1888, is to serve the Norwich Free Academy (NFA). The museum is charged with collecting, preserving, restoring, presenting and interpreting art and artifacts which support the fine arts and general curricula of NFA. The museum functions as an integral component of NFA, enhancing and enriching the school's programs.

The museum is located at 108 Crescent Street and is open year-round to visitors. The museum has 4 full time staff, 30 volunteers (and usually about 4 to 6 interns annually.)

As Norwich's only art museum, the Slater serves the community and national and international visitors. The Slater invites active and collaborative learning and awakens visitors to the richness and diversity of the human experience through the medium of art. The Slater Memorial Museum strives to be a welcoming, living entity that promotes and instills a passion for art in everyone that enters. In carrying out this mission, the museum commits to the following goals:

- To support and expand the Norwich Art School and fine arts curricula of NFA.
- To prepare NFA students for lifelong participation in museums, art appreciation, travel, research and study.
- To serve the broadest population through the presentation and interpretation of the best examples of the traditions and art of world cultures.
- To preserve and interpret the 19th century American museum concept of founders William A. Slater, Robert Porter Keep, Edward Robinson and Henry Watson Kent.

### 2017 Accomplishments



- The notable 2017 accomplishment is the exhibition ***Bela Lyon Pratt: Sculptor of Monument***
- One of the best attended and most well-received was the pen-turning event presented by the museum and the Central CT Wood Turners where wood from the historic and iconic European Copper Beech tree was turned in beautiful pens for all... free of charge.
- We're very excited that panels from the 2015 exhibition ***John Meyer of Norwich: An American Original*** and from the 2017 exhibition ***Bela Lyon Pratt: Sculptor of Monument*** will be on display at State airports as part of an inaugural program to bring the arts and heritage of CT to travelers and tourists.

## LEFFINGWELL HOUSE MUSEUM

The Society of the Founders of Norwich own and operate the Leffingwell House Museum and their mission is to educate the community and promote the history of Norwich from first contact through the Civil War by showcasing archival materials preserved and protected at the Leffingwell House Museum.

The Leffingwell House Museum has 23 volunteers who help with different phases of museum activities such as maintenance, programs/events, interpretation, fundraising, exhibits, outreach, website/social media/advertising, archival cataloging and preservation. **Our visitation and number of events increased in 2017.** The Leffingwell House Museum is located at 348 Washington Street and is open seasonally.

### 2017 Accomplishments

In 2017, we added 2 new events called Colonial Ladies of Leffingwell House and Guys with Guns. Some of our other accomplishments include hosting 6 reenactor groups that participated in our activities, completed preservation projects such as historic samplers and centennial flag, started the collection re-cataloging process, painted the East and South sides of the museum, replaced the gutters, installed an appropriate east side storm door, updated wiring and outside lighting.

Further, we collaborated with local and history groups on activities, participated with Last Green Valley in Walktober and Historic collaborations. Additionally, we upgraded our exhibit presentation, worked to improve room lighting, rearranged and painted large basement exhibit cases. We hosted tours for school groups, private organizations, girl/boy scouts, and received donations/loans of historic pieces toward our collections; boy scout troop 73 did outside projects and flag ceremony.

#### Number of Visitors in 2017

**1,286 visitors**

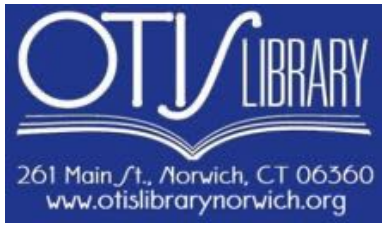
#### Number of Events Held in 2017

**14 events**



**Left:** Youngsters learn how to churn butter from a volunteer

**Right:** City Officials gather at the Leffingwell to receive Benedict Arnold's "Leg" from Flock Theater



## Otis Library Mission Statement

Otis Library provides free and open access to information, ideas, and services that anticipate our community's personal, educational, and professional needs. The library enriches our region by maintaining a safe and welcoming environment and by offering resources that promote lifelong learning. The Library has 29 staff. The Otis Library is located at 261 Main Street and is open year-round.

### Number of Visitors in 2017

**156,928**

### Number of Events Held in 2017

**447 (Adult, Teen, and Children's programs)**

## Highlights of 2017:

- "Take Your Child to the Library Day" events included a family celebration of the Chinese New Year and African-American storytelling.
- Otis Library, in partnership with the Norwich Free Academy Gold, original stand-up comedy written and performed by people who live with mental illness.
- The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Jim Lafayette Memorial Series of Writers of Science Fiction, a program that honors the memory of local science fiction and fantasy fan and writer Jim Lafayette with appearance by authors of the genre.
- The Summer Learning Program "One World" offered programs for pre-schoolers, children and teens on art, food, math, science, music, and reading.
- Otis Library hosted a Latino Authors Book Discussion Series, facilitated by Aida Heredia, Professor of Hispanic Studies at Connecticut College.
- Otis Library created a monthly Genealogy Club.
- The Friends of Otis Library held two successful book sales.
- The Rhode Island Computer Museum offered classes on robotics for teens and tweens.
- The Library provided a 12-week series of free Citizenship Classes.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual O'tis a Festival: a marketplace of all things creative drew over 2000 people to downtown Norwich.



Otis Library hosted the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History traveling exhibit "Exploring Human Origins: What Does It Mean to Be Human?" This exhibit attracted over 10,000 people to Otis Library from Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey.



The library started a monthly art program for teens.



## WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2018?

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 2018 Initiatives:**

- Historical reenactments on the Norwichtown Green
- Walk Norwich: Norwich Freedom Trail & Millionaires' Triangle Self-Guided Trails
- Walktober 2018 & Second Saturday Tours 2018
- The William B. Stanley Lecture Series & Annual Meeting

### **Norwich Heritage and Regional Visitors' Center:**

- CT Open House Day June 2018
- The 2018 Summer Internship Program
- Ghost Tours of the Colonial Burial Ground October 2018

### **Other Preservation Initiatives:**

- Ongoing restoration of 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
- Ongoing advocacy of our historic resources

## FURTHER READING

Carley, Rachel. "Norwich, Connecticut Historic Neighborhoods." The Norwich Historical Society, 2008.

Caulkins, Frances Manwaring. *History of Norwich Connecticut From its Possession by the Indians, To the Year 1866*. Norwich, Connecticut: John Trumbull Press, 1989.

**Websites:** The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation & the State Historic Preservation Office



## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **VISIT** the Norwich Heritage & 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



Overall, NHS 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.

The Norwich Heritage and Regional Visitors' Center could not have operated without a dedicated group of volunteers for the 2017 season:

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

## QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

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**[www.norwichhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.norwichhistoricalsociety.org)**