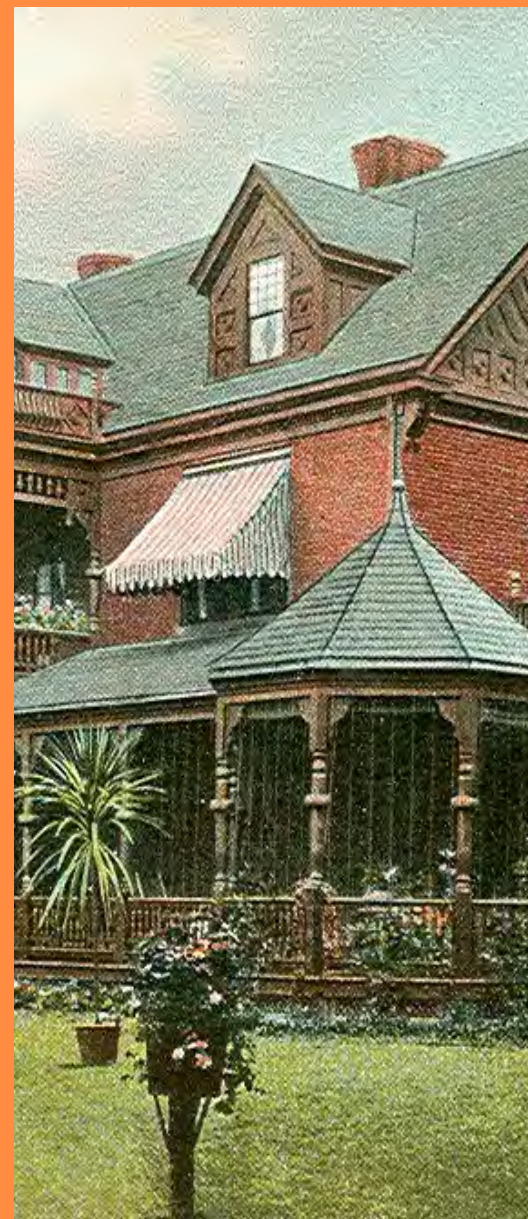
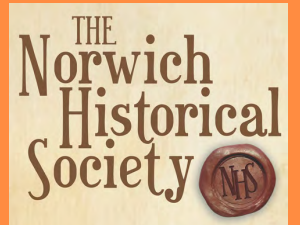


HERITAGE TOURISM REPORT

A summary of
heritage tourism
activities in 2019-2020



Prepared by Regan Miner
Executive Director
Norwich Historical Society





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.



NORWICH'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

The City of Norwich has **11 National Register Historic Districts and 26 Individual Listings on the National Register of Historic Places**. While this is an honorary listing, review is required if changes involve federal funding, licensing or permits. Further, properties in National Register Historic Districts or listed on the National Register of Historic Places are eligible for financial incentives such as **state or federal historic rehabilitation tax credits**. Lastly, buildings and structures located within historic districts or individually listed on or nominated for the National Register of Historic Places fall under the **CT Environmental Protection Act** which permits legal recourse for the unreasonable destruction of the state's natural and historic resources.

Local Historic Districts are more restrictive. 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 are reviewed by a local historic district commission. Norwich has two local historic districts; the Norwichtown and Little Plain Historic District which is regulated by the **Norwich Historic District Commission**. Local Historic Districts are automatically included in National Historic Districts

Village Districts are a zoning tool designed to protect a community's character and historic development patterns. Establishing Village Districts in areas of distinctive character, landscape or historic value are specifically identified in the Norwich Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Norwich has one Village District: **The Norwichtown Village District Overlay Zone**.

The City of Norwich is a **Certified Local Government** and is eligible for many grants through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

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

NORWICH'S NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Properties in these districts are eligible for financial incentives such as state and federal tax credits and fall under the protection of the CT Environmental Protection Act:

- Bean Hill
- Chelsea Parade
- Downtown Norwich
- Greenville
- Jail Hill
- Laurel Hill
- Little Plain
- Norwichtown
- Norwich Hospital
- Taftville
- Yantic Falls



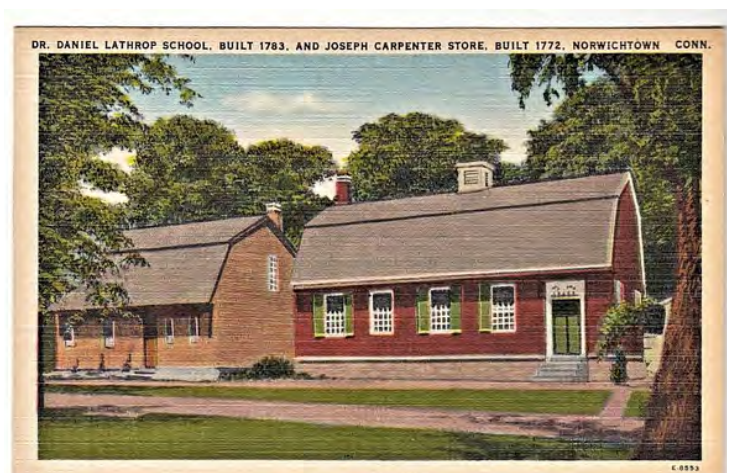
c. 1870-73 Norwich City Hall located in the Downtown Norwich Historic District

The Yantic Woolen Mill and Occum Hydroelectric Mill and Dam are individually listed on the National Register

NORWICH'S LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Properties in these districts are regulated by the Norwich Historic District Commission. Any exterior change to the property visible from a public right of way needs to go before the commission. Properties in the local districts are automatically listed as National Districts.

- Little Plain
- Norwichtown



The c. 1772 Joseph Carpenter Silversmith Shop (left) and c.1783 Dr. Daniel Lathrop Schoolhouse (right) located in the Norwichtown Historic District



ABOUT THE NORWICH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Formed in 2001 by Bill Stanley and Peg Wilson, the Norwich Historical Society seeks to **preserve, protect and promote** the rich history of Norwich, CT. We are a registered 501(c)(3), non-profit organization run by a part time Executive Director and a volunteer board of directors.

Over the past five years, the Norwich Historical Society launched a number of initiatives designed to strengthen Norwich's heritage tourism efforts such as opening the Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors' Center and launching the Walk Norwich Trail system which is a series of historically themed self-guided walking tours.

VISION AND GOALS

The vision for the Norwich Historical Society includes activities that will promote community engagement through greater historical and cultural understanding of Norwich's diverse past. NHS will be a critical historical resource for adults and children alike. The continued success of the Norwich Heritage and Visitors' Center, comprehensive public and youth programs, and expanded offerings of walking tours will help solidify NHS' important role.

Advocacy of historic preservation of Norwich's past will be a core organizational priority and will ensure that the community's fragile antiquity is saved for posterity. NHS will help share and preserve Norwich's rich history through education, information, and advocacy. 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.



PRESERVE

The Norwich Historical Society has utilized grant money to restore a number of historic properties over the years such as:

01

**C. 1783 DR. DANIEL
LATHROP
SCHOOLHOUSE**

69 East Town Street

02

**C. 1789 EAST
DISTRICT
SCHOOLHOUSE**

365 Washington Street

03

**C. 1847 BUCKINGHAM
MEMORIAL**

307 Main Street

04

**C.1763 DAVID A.
GREENLEAF HOUSE**

2 Town Street

05

**C. 1772 JOSEPH
CARPENTER
SILVERSMITH SHOP**

71 East Town Street

06

**C. 1753 DIAH
MANNING HOUSE**

We are currently working with the owners to develop a preservation plan.



The c.1783 Dr. Daniel Lathrop Schoolhouse now serving as the Norwich Heritage & Regional Visitors' Center



The c.1763 David Greenleaf House located at 2 Town Street ; the rear exterior restoration of the house. Feb. 2020

PROTECT



UNCAS LEAP HERITAGE AREA

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. The committee has met for the past twelve years about the project.



GOV. SAMUEL HUNTINGTON MANSION

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 Governor Samuel Huntington House. Historic Preservation professionals are working with UCFS to establish historically correct energy upgrades. The building is located in the Norwichtown Historic District.



COLONIAL NORWICHTOWN BURYING GROUND

The Norwich Historical Society worked with the developers of the proposed development on Town Street to mitigate the adverse effects the development would have on the Colonial Norwichtown Burying Ground and the Norwichtown Historic District.

PROMOTE

We promote the rich history of Norwich by hosting programs such as ...

01

**SECOND SATURDAY
WALKING TOURS**

04

**EDUCATIONAL
LECTURES**

02

WALKTOBER

via The Last Green Valley

05

**NORWICH HERITAGE
DAY**

Historical reenactments

03

**ANTIEN T GHOSTS OF
NORWICH TOUR**

06

**NORWICH HERITAGE
& REGIONAL
VISITORS' CENTER**

WALK NORWICH TRAILS

The Walk Norwich Trails are a series of historically themed walking trails designed to educate residents and visitors about the rich history of Norwich. The trails provide people with an interactive walking self-guided trail complete with trail marker signs, interpretive signs, and brochures. In total, the Walk Norwich trail network has five major trails, four of which are themed self-guided walking tours:

- **Uncas Leap Trail** – stories about the Mohegan Tribe.
- **Benedict Arnold Trail** – stories about Norwich's role in the American Revolution
- **Freedom Trail** – stories about civil rights in Norwich
- **Millionaires' Triangle** – stories about the industrialists that capitalized on the Industrial Revolution during the Gilded Age
- **Heritage Trail** is the main spine of the network, as it connects many of the trails to each other along the Yantic River, a Connecticut-designated greenway corridor.



The trails can be accessed via walknorwich.org

OUR PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

The Norwich Historical Society is the lead agency of the Norwich Heritage Groups, which are 15 heritage based non-profits in Norwich. 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. 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, The Slater Memorial Museum, Walk Norwich, 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, and the Norwich Historic District Commission.

These groups frequently cross promote and share information and resources.



In 2018, The Society of the Founders of Norwich (SFN), owners and operators of the Leffingwell House Museum formed a partnership with the Norwich Historical Society (NHS) with the goal of restoring two historic properties owned by the SFN: the c.1763 David Greenleaf House and the c. 1772 Joseph Carpenter Silversmith Shop. NHS would act on behalf of the SFN to write grants, secure funds, and collaborate with the SFN to undertake the authentic restorations of both buildings.



RESOURCES

The State Historic Preservation Office

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 5, Hartford, CT 06103
<https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Historic-Preservation>

Preservation Connecticut

940 Whitney Avenue Hamden, CT 06517
203-562-6312 ~ contact@preservationct.org ~
www.preservationct.org

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.

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