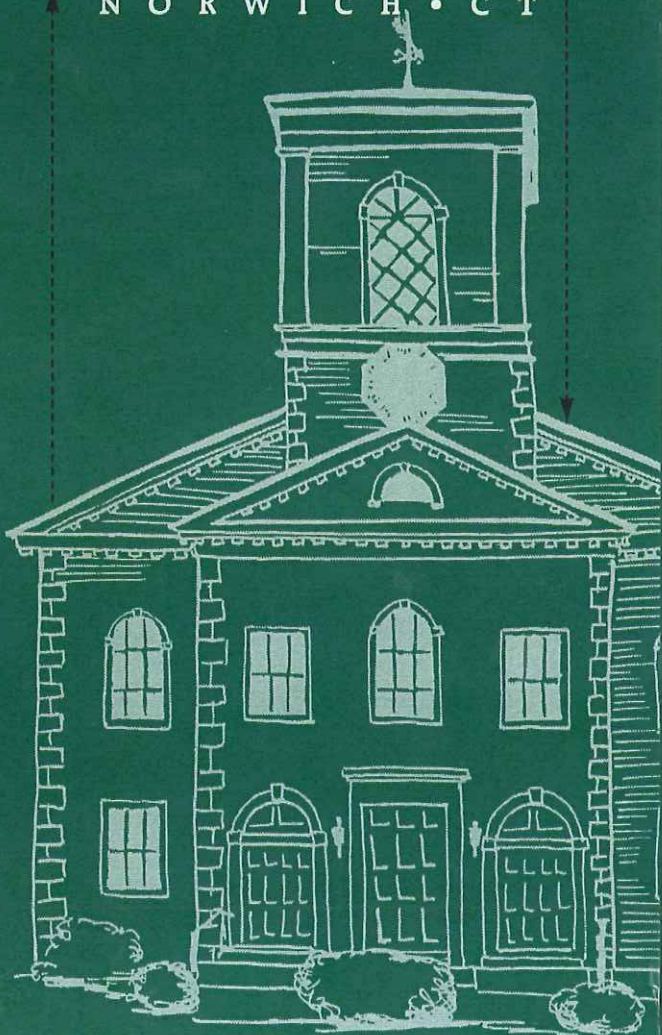




Walking Guide to Historic
Norwichtown
N O R W I C H • C T



Approximate length • 2.5 miles
Estimated time to complete • 1.25 hours

Norwich was founded in 1659 by 35 English settlers led by Major John Mason and Reverend James Fitch. Most of these families came from Old Saybrook, with a few from New London and Guilford, CT.

They purchased a nine-mile square (9 x 9 = 81 square miles) plot of land from the Mohegan Indians. Their initial settlement surrounded the Green in Norwichtown. Early settlers included the Huntington, Lathrop, and Leffingwell families. Only three houses from 1660 (and possibly a fourth) remain standing.

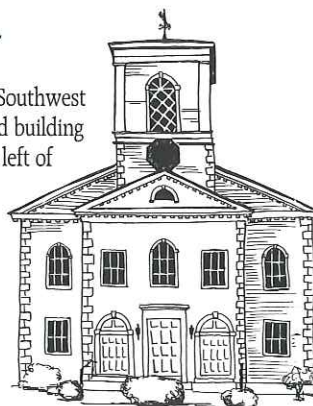
Norwichtown was the first center of Norwich. Chelsea, at the confluence of the Shetucket and Yantic Rivers, became the center in the early 1800s. Around the Green, the buildings reflected the needs of the colonists as well as their positions of rank in society. The Congregational Church stood on the Southwest corner of the Green and the Court House on the Southeast corner. Taverns and shops interspersed with homes of prominent residents attested to its significance as a place of gathering and commerce. Most town greens in New England also served as shared pasture land and practice grounds for the militia. Today the Green in Norwichtown remains a place of social and cultural events.

The remarkable condition of the venerable homes in Norwichtown demonstrates the high regard Norwich citizens have for their heritage. Modern buildings and roads have inevitably added to this area, yet if Samuel Huntington were to walk through Norwichtown today, he would still recognize much of his former hometown.

The Walking Tour of Norwichtown can be started at any point. This brochure, however, begins at the First Congregational Church, moves along East Town Street towards Washington Street, and back up Town Street making an easy to follow loop. Only representative historic homes in the area are listed. Neighboring homes on either side are just as interesting architecturally. The street number, first owner, and date of construction are listed in this guide, followed by a brief history. The architectural style is in bold print with elements of that style noted. The homes on this walking tour are all of the colonial era from New England Colonial, a straightforward peaked roof or saltbox with small multiple-paned windows and narrow clapboards, to Georgian, with its classical details derived from Italian Renaissance of the mid-16th Century in Europe, and to the later Federal (or Adam) style, with roof-line balustrades, Palladian windows, and decorative detailing.

1. First Congregational Church - 81 East Town Street - 1801

The first Meeting House stood on the Southwest corner of the Green. In 1673 the second building was erected atop Church Rocks (to the left of the present, fifth, building). This was during the disturbed period known as King Philip's War. Norwich however, aside from being constantly on alert, suffered few skirmishes, and escaped being as direly affected by the conflict as many other New England towns. The third church was built on the same spot but when it came time to erect a new church (in 1752), it was placed under the Rocks on the 'plain'. It burned down in 1801 and was replaced by the present building.



Each family was assigned a pew, with the most prominent families seated closest to the pulpit. Reverend James Fitch was the first minister. Dr. Benjamin Lord was pastor from 1716 to 1784. His sermons were like a weekly newspaper with the latest reports of the war and town news (complete with editorial comments and recommendations for the congregation). **Federal** - Symmetry in construction reflects the "balance" desired in Colonial architecture. The corners are joined by quoins (obvious squares, made to look like stones) which break up the flat look of the outline.

2. Jesse Brown Tavern - 77 East Town Street - 1790

Jesse Brown's house was licensed as a tavern and stage coach stop in 1790. It was famous for its fine dinners as his stages constantly supplied him with delicacies from Boston and Hartford. President John Adams dined here. In 1814, Captain Bela Peck bought the tavern and lived here until his death in 1850. Later, Moses Pierce gave the building to the United Workers to be used as a home for poor children. Today, it is the home of a philanthropic community agency. **Federal** - Note the gabled roof, recessed arches over windows, and attenuated columns. The Adams brothers of England popularized this more ornamental of the Colonial building styles.



3. Joseph Carpenter's Shop - 73 East Town Street - 1772

This was Joseph Carpenter's Silversmith Shop and is believed to be the only surviving frame silversmith shop in New England. Today it is owned by the Society of the Founders of Norwich. Joseph made clocks, jewelry, pewter, and engravings. His pieces are highly valued collector's items. The building is presently used as a law office. **Colonial/Georgian** - The gambrel roof allows for larger interior. Double front doors may have been used as separate entrances for the silver and mercantile shops which were operated within by Joseph and Gardiner Carpenter, respectively.



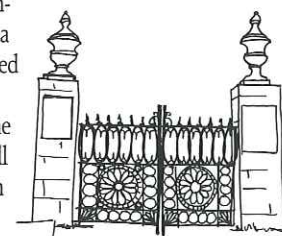
4. Daniel Lathrop School - 69 East Town Street - 1783

The Connecticut Colony laws required that every town of thirty families maintain a school to teach reading and writing. Dr. Daniel Lathrop left an endowment for the establishment of a free school, with the condition that it be kept in session eleven months a year. Prior to this, a teacher would board with a family for a few months and then move on to another section of town to do the same. **Colonial/Georgian** - Brick construction was used for both safety and longevity. A wooden belfry rises above the gambrel roof. Rehabilitated in 1997.



5. Norwichtown Burying Ground - 1715-1903

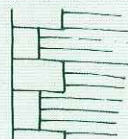
The East Town Street gates lead to the Old Burying Ground. Many early settlers are buried here; Samuel Huntington (CT governor) Benedict Arnold's mother (Martha Waterman King Arnold), and members of the founding families. At the southwest entrance on Cemetery Lane, there is a marker for twenty French soldiers who died here during the Revolutionary War. Extraordinary examples of early gravestone carvers are found here. The Faith Trumbull Chapter, of the Daughters of the American Revolution, installed the memorial gates in 1903.



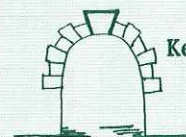
Gambrel Roof



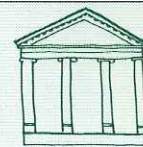
Quoins



Keystone

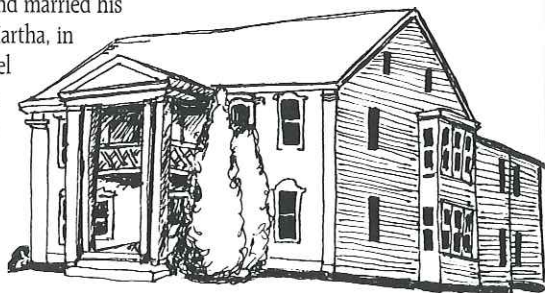


Greek Revival Porch



6. Samuel Huntington - 34 East Town Street - 1769

The most famous member of the Huntington Family was Samuel (1731 - 1796). Born in Scotland, CT, he studied law under Reverend Ebenezer Devotion, and married his daughter, Martha, in 1761. Samuel and Martha had no children but adopted a niece and nephew. Samuel served his country in many ways; President of the Continental Congress, signer of the Declaration of Independence, Governor of Connecticut, and State Supreme Court Chief Justice. He is buried in the Huntington Tomb in the back of the house in the Old Burying Grounds. **Federal** - The front Greek Revival porch and giant portico, as well as door side lights, are later additions giving the house a more Federal style appearance. Note the elaborate Greek Revival front porch and the face of Mohegan Chief, Uncas, on the chimney.



7. Jedediah and Ebenezer Huntington - 23 East Town Street - 1765

Son of General Jabez Huntington, Jedediah went to Harvard, fought at Bunker Hill, and became a Brigadier General in 1777. He married Faith Trumbull (daughter of Governor Jonathan Trumbull of Lebanon, and sister of the artist, John Trumbull).

She is said to have offered her fine red wool cloak to the making of soldier's uniforms which was an inspiration for others to rally behind the Revolutionary cause. After the Revolutionary War, Jedediah was appointed Collector of Customs at New London and built his "Mount Vernon" there. His brother, General Ebenezer Huntington, lived here after 1789. **Georgian/Federal** - The keystones over the lower windows and fanlight are Federal style additions.



8. 11 Huntington Lane - Colonel Joshua Huntington - 1771

Colonel Joshua Huntington (third son of General Jabez Huntington) was a successful merchant and ship owner. During the Revolution, he served in the army and later helped outfit privateers. He supplied the French Army at Newport, R.I., with provisions and had charge of prizes sent to Connecticut by the French Navy. **Georgian** - 12 over 12 windows, these small squares of glass (12 on top, 12 on the bottom) were introduced around 1720. Previous windows would either have been casement type or small square apertures which did not open. The standard size pane, 6" w x 8" h, was established early and multiples of these dictated the dimensions of the 18th Century windows. Windows are often the first thing to be "modernized" in older homes, thus few 'original' windows are left on early colonial homes.



9. 16 Huntington Lane - Bradford-Huntington - 1660

This structure was built on John Bradford's home lot in 1660. In 1719, Captain Joshua Huntington, a well known merchant who traded extensively in the West Indies, bought the original smaller house. He added the gambrel roof, central stone chimney, attic overhang, and pediments over the end windows making the house more **Georgian** in style.



10. Reverend Joseph Strong - 30 Huntington Lane - 1778

Reverend Joseph Strong married Mary Huntington (daughter of Jabez) in 1778. He came to Norwich as an assistant to Reverend Benjamin Lord, who was then in his eighty-sixth year. **Colonial/Georgian** - Notice the interesting bay window with two port hole windows over the front door, which may have been later alterations. The stepping stone by the street helped ladies descend from their carriage. The small windows over and along side the door are called lights.



11. 25 Scotland Road - Thomas Danforth - 1746

Thomas Danforth was a pewterer who designed and fashioned plates, bowls, and tankards. He was one of fourteen children of Reverend Samuel Danforth of Taunton, Massachusetts. At one time, he had a shop on the Green. Examples of his work are on exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Leffingwell House Museum. The street was originally named for his family. **Colonial** - This is a good example of an average sized home. Peaked porch roof a later addition. Compare the early attic window with the 19th Century styles on the lower portion of the house.



12. 2 Canterbury Turnpike - Avery & Tracy - 1745

This corner lot was originally where the Sluman home existed. In 1745, William Lathrop built his home here. Many years later, in 1793, Samuel Avery and Major Thomas Tracy had a shop here. The house has been altered by succeeding generations. **Federal** - The front door off to one side, and the second story over hanging the first story (forming a jetty), is a variation of this style.



13. Christopher Huntington - 410 Washington Street - Circa 1720

Original settler Christopher Huntington married Ruth Rockwell in 1652. His son Christopher, Jr., was the third baby and first male child born in Norwich (1660). He was an expert surveyor and served as town clerk and deacon. He had four daughters and seven sons. At his death in 1735, he passed the home lot to his son John. John's sons, Caleb and Ezra, lived nearby. **New England Colonial** - Look for the 12 over 8 windows on the top floor, and the 12 over 12 on the bottom floor.



Hip Roof

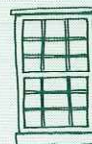


Fanlight

Dormer



Nine over Nine Windows



Gable Roof



Lights



14. Daniel Lathrop Coit - 387 Washington Street - 1785

Captain Joseph Coit was a merchant seaman in New London until the Revolution. His son, Daniel

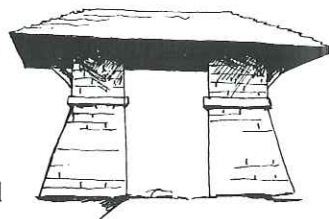


Lathrop Coit, traveled throughout Europe meeting with Benjamin Franklin and General Lafayette. He married Elizabeth Bill in 1786 and purchased this lovely home. Jabez Perkins

also had a blacksmithy on the property. **Georgian/Federal** - The keystones over lower windows, pedimented dormers, and glassed in porch are possibly later Federal style additions to the original Georgian structure.

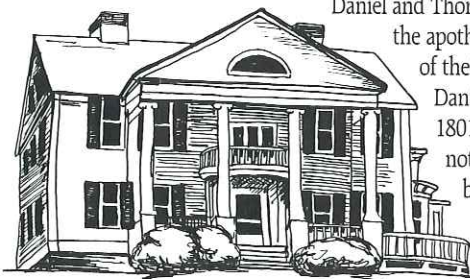
15. Lowthorpe Meadows

Of this 18 acre meadow, the major portion was deeded to a Trust in 1907 by Emily Serena Gilman and Louisa Gilman Lane; "in consideration of their love and goodwill to the inhabitants of Norwich, and in memory of their sister, Maria Perit Gilman, and of their Lathrop Ancestry...to be kept as a free open space for the public good, to be unencumbered by dwelling houses, barns, or any nuisance whatever." The Lowthorpe Meadow Association, a group of interested citizens, manages care of this beautiful meadow.



16. Thomas Lathrop - 385 Washington Street - 1783

Thomas Lathrop built this beautiful mansion up on the hill near his cousin Daniel's home. He married his first cousin Lydia Hubbard. After her death, he married Lydia Bill. Their gardens and extensive view of the Yantic River Valley made their home a showplace.



Daniel and Thomas carried on the apothecary business of their uncle, Dr. Daniel Lathrop, until 1801. They imported not only medicines but fruits, wines, and other goods from Europe.

Georgian - The massive pedimented roof, with fan light on giant portico, is supported by fluted Ionic columns. Monumental pilasters and denticulated trim are decorative elements associated with this style.

17. Olmstead-Lathrop - 380 Washington Street - 1600-1745

John Olmstead, Norwich's first physician, originally settled on this lot and then sold his home to Samuel Lathrop, a founder, whose family owned it for many generations. It burned down in

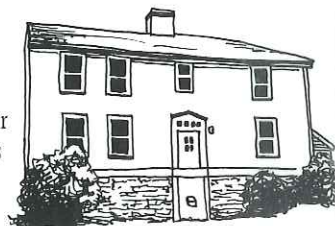
1745 and Dr. Daniel Lathrop rebuilt it. Dr. Lathrop had the first apothecary shop in Connecticut. He married Jerusha Talcott, of Hartford, in 1744. Their home was renowned for its beautiful



gardens which included flowers, herbs, vegetables, and fruit trees. Poetess Lydia Huntly Sigourney, for whom Sigourney Street in Hartford is named, lived here while her father was a gardener for the Lathrops. Other notable Norwich residents who have lived here include Daniel Coit Gilman (educator) and Benedict Arnold (while apprenticed to Dr. Daniel Lathrop). **Colonial/Georgian** - Note the 12 over 12 windows and shed dormer (center of roof) with end chimneys.

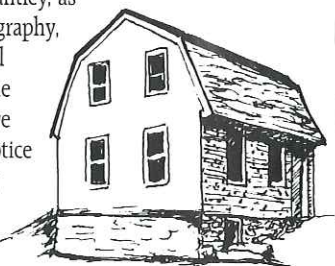
18. 377 Washington Street - Dr. Joshua Lathrop - 1763

Daniel and Joshua Lathrop built their apothecary shop on this lot, near his home. It is said to be the first in Connecticut, and the only one between New York and Boston, at that time. The infamous American Revolutionary War traitor, Benedict Arnold, is believed to have apprenticed here. **Colonial** - The front section was built first. As business within necessitated more space, new sections (on the right and rear) were added.



19. East District School - 365 Washington Street - 1789

The East District School House was built in 1789 to serve the needs of the growing community. Lydia Huntley, as a student here, learned spelling, geography, and mathematics. The teaching of all subjects to both boys and girls, in the same classroom, was very progressive for its time. **Colonial/Georgian** - Notice the similarity in design and building materials between this and the Dr. Lathrop School on the Green.



20. Thomas Williams - 363 Washington Street - 1759

Thomas Williams was a tailor. His home and shop were typical of the many shops along the road to the Green. He sold his property to William Beard in 1798 and moved out of Norwich. The property was subsequently occupied by a succession of small shopkeepers. **Colonial**.



21. Leffingwell House - 348 Washington Street - 1675

Lt. Thomas Leffingwell was an original settler in 1659. He bought this house from Steven Backus in 1675 and enlarged it. His son, Ensign Thomas Leffingwell, operated this house as a public tavern starting in 1701. Thomas's grandson, Christopher Leffingwell, was a prominent leader and industrialist during the Revolution. He built five small mills; fulling, chocolate, grist, paper, and stocking mills. He operated a general store on Washington Street near Harland Road. Several members of his family had homes nearby. The building was moved to its present site when the Route 2/32 connector was built in 1957 meeting Washington and Town Streets. **Colonial** - Maintained and operated as a museum by the Society of the Founders of Norwich, CT, Inc.



22. Samuel Manning - 85 Town Street - 1750

On the point of land, between Cemetery Lane and Town Street, stands the home of Diah Manning (b. 1760), inherited by him from his father, Samuel. Diah served as Drum-Major in the hand-picked bodyguard of George Washington at Valley Forge. He is said to have brought the last meal to Major Andre, on the morning of the British Spy's execution. Diah served for many years as the bell-ringer for Norwichtown. **Colonial/Georgian**.



Data compiled from *History of Norwich, CT* (F.M. Caulkins), *Old Houses of Norwich* (M.E. Perkins), and Society of the Founders of Norwich's *Walking Guides*. Special thanks to E.B. Read for research and writing and to Linda Edgerton for editing and polish. This brochure courtesy of the Norwich Tourism Commission, Norwich City Council, and private contributions. Published 1995

23. Lord's Tavern - 86 Town Street - 1760

At the junction of Elm and Town Streets, Eleazar Lord built his tavern in 1760. It was called the "Compass House" because it faced due north. Many lawyers relaxed here between their times at the Court House, which was on the Green. Each of Norwichtown's taverns attracted groups of people eager to read the newspapers from New London, Boston, and Hartford. Norwich's first newspaper, *The Norwich Packet* began publication in 1773 and continued until the early 1800s.

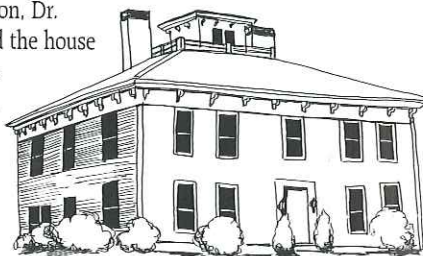
Colonial - Hooded entrance is a 19th-century alteration. Ell in rear, also served as a post office.



24. Lathrop House - 14 Elm Avenue - 1764

In 1747 William Morgan bought this house, which was built between 1747-1752. In 1764 Azariah Lathrop purchased the home and subsequently enlarged it. His son, Dr. Gordon Lathrop inherited the house and he operated his shop across the Green in 1791.

Colonial - The attractive windowed cupola on the roof and brackets under the eaves are Victorian period additions.



25. Knight-Peck Tavern - 8 Elm Avenue - 1717

Sarah Knight traveled horseback from Boston to New York in 1704, and kept a diary of her trip describing the unsettled countryside of the time. She operated the Tavern for several years. Her stature in the community was noted by her assigned pew at the Congregational Church. In 1718, however, she was brought before the Justice of the Peace for selling strong drink to the Indians, which was illegal. Joseph Peck owned the tavern after 1754, and made many additions to it. The handsome scrolled cast iron fence is a late 19th century addition. **Colonial**.



26. Simon Huntington - 2 Elm Avenue - 1690

One of the oldest existing houses in Norwich, this house was built by Simon Huntington, Jr. on land originally deeded to him in 1688 by his father, Simon, Sr. Its original large dimensions (increased even further by later owners) served it well as a tavern which Simon, Jr. operated. Simon, Sr. came to Norwich with the first 35 men in 1660 and founded, with his brother Christopher, the Norwich Huntington dynasty. The building has been meticulously restored. **Colonial** - The narrow clapboards and gabled (pointed) roof elongate the house's appearance.



Norwichtown Walking Map

