



Norwich Historical Society

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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LOOKING TO 2026



If a purpose of history is to understand the present and help us shape the future, this winter's Discover Norwich talk on local experiences during the American Revolution serves the purpose.

The Revolutionary era was a challenging time for Norwich; living on a frontier, combined with a world turned upside down, forced everyone to make hard decisions about political allegiances, policing domestic enemies, keeping their families safe, and maintaining solidarity. By the end of the war, Norwich voters declared that they were free citizens with a desire for tranquility and a principle of humanity. They had been challenged, but came together as a community, affirming the sovereignty of the people living under the rule of law.

The questions they had to tackle resonate with issues we face today and provide opportunity for building discussion, rooted in the past but pointing toward the future.

The Discover Norwich program runs every Thursday in February at 6:30 pm on Zoom.
www.norwichhistory.org/discover-norwich-2026



Above: Marion Cross students had some new activities this year at the annual Sheep-to-Shawl program. Thanks to Chris Brady for building three classroom-sized looms.

Another purpose of history is to provide us with roots. In a mobile world, we stand in need of stable and coherent places in our lives to ground us and orient us.

There's a rhythm to each year at Norwich Historical Society that grounds and orients us to this place we call home. In the winter we gather on Zoom to learn about new research through the Discover Norwich program. There's behind-the scenes tours, coffees, and plenty of opportunities to volunteer in the archives. Spring brings the House & Garden Tour and Sheep-to-Shawl with the 3rd grade. As the months turn warmer, walking tours and evening strolls begin. Fall brings the Antiques Show and Walktober.

I hope you are able to join us in 2026 to converse with other Norwichians, explore the landscape, and connect to the world a bit more deeply.

We wouldn't be able to do our work without the generosity of our volunteers, members, donors, and business sponsors. Your gifts of money and time provide us with the financial means and renewed energies and spirit to do all that we do. Thank you!

- Sarah Rooker, NHS Director

***Our Mission: Norwich Historical Society cultivates a vibrant
sense of place and community through discovering,
preserving, and sharing the history of Norwich.***

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*The following have included NHS
in their estate plans.*

Betty Ann Aldrich
Nancy Osgood
Donald and Christine Bartlett
Robert Parker
Carolyn Clinton and Sheldon Novick
David Pierce



2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

We celebrated Dan & Whit's 70th birthday this year! For 70 years, Dan & Whit's has been a vital part of community life in Norwich. In 1955 Leon Merrill sold his business to Dan Fraser and Whit Hicks. Store expansion in 1963, 1968, and 1972 provided space for over 250,000 items fulfilling the phrase "if we don't have it, you don't need it." The countless small acts of kindness and the impressive "19 Days of Norwich" have endeared this store to all of Norwich. Our 2025 exhibit featured Chad Finer's portraits, taken in 2006, and Kay McCabe's photographs taken this summer which capture what we all feel is the heartbeat of the community. In August we held a birthday party with over 250 people in attendance, all offering the Fraser family much love and congratulations.

Below: Dan & Whit's employee reunion, summer 2025. Photograph by Chad Finer



This fall we offered our first ever "Walktober" in collaboration with several other community groups. Over 150 people participated in 11 free hikes and walks. We explored the beautiful autumn woods, lovely old cemeteries, and cellar holes deep in the woods. We went foraging. We learned about women's stories, Norwich University, and the American Revolution. It will be fun to see how this event grows.

Below: Board member Bob Bristol talks about the Revolution in Fairview Cemetery during Walktober.



Discover Norwich, the House & Garden Tour and the Norwich Antiques Show were all successful fundraisers this year. Many thanks to Gail Torkelson for organizing the Norwich Antiques Show. Thank you to Selma Bornstein, Keith and Anita Drake, Jen Moyer, and David and Ann Shriver Sargent and for sharing their properties at the Garden Tour.

Board comings and goings: We thank Judy Brown for her many years of service to NHS both as Director and then on the Board. Her contributions are vast. Anna Adachi-Mejia brought nonprofit wisdom to the Board and Cheri Mather was a fearless Zoom presenter and midnight alarm responder, thank you. We welcome Doug Britton, Elizabeth Howard, and Pam Smith as candidates to the Board in 2026.

This year Elliot Hamilton chose NHS to be the beneficiary of his Eagle Scout project. He worked closely with us to move our large collection of tools to a cleaner and more secure location in our barn attic. He gathered his fellow scouts to build shelving and make the move. We are most grateful!

ADDITIONS TO THE COLLECTION

The biggest donation to the collection in 2025 was a box of hundreds of slides from the Norwich Planning and Zoning office. These document Norwich in the 1990s--especially changes along Route 5. Kevin Hybels spent the year scanning, printing identifying, and cataloging the photographs.



Thank you to the Collections Committee for their varied work which involves research, cataloging, cleaning, and exhibiting hundreds of objects, photographs, and manuscripts.

This year they installed an exhibit at Norwich Public Library featuring the tool collection and the wide variety of skills needed to use those tools.

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22nd ANNUAL NORWICH ANTIQUES SHOW

Saturday, September 19, 2026, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Are you looking for that perfect antique for your home? This wonderful show and sale attracts some of the region's finest dealers, showcasing fine country to formal antiques on the beautiful grounds of the Norwich Historical Society. We'll be holding our annual antiques "Road Show" evaluating the value of your own treasures and a "Doctor is In" tent where experts will be available to look at your antiques and answer your questions about storage, repair, and care.



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FINANCES

Condensed Balance Sheet as of:	9/30/2024	9/30/2025
Assets		
Cash & Equivalent	\$164,318	\$216,887
Property, Plant & Equipment	\$442,084	\$420,850
Total Assets	\$606,402	\$637,737
Liabilities & Equity		
Current Liabilities	\$1,848	\$0
Retained Earnings	\$441,642	\$460,510
Unrestricted Retained Earnings	\$57,500	\$72,838
Restricted Funds	\$95,719	\$71,170
Net Income	\$9,693	\$33,219
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$606,402	\$637,737
Condensed Operating Profit and Loss for year ending:		
	9/30/2024	9/30/2025
Revenue		
Annual Campaign	\$24,950	\$26,421
Membership	\$13,904	\$15,421
Business Donors	\$6,050	\$7,908
Town Appropriation	\$8,000	\$8,000
Special Events	\$23,062	\$19,571
Restricted Funds	\$2,928	\$4,452
Other	\$4,709	\$45,553
Total Revenue	\$83,604	\$127,326
Expenses		
Office Operations	\$57,845	\$59,203
Building & Grounds	\$8,957	\$11,762
Restricted Funds	\$1,968	\$1,495
Other	\$5,141	\$21,646
Total Expenses	\$73,911	\$94,107
Net Operating Revenue	\$9,693	\$33,219