



**NORWICH**  
Historical Society  
and Community Center

# HISTORIC DRIVING TOUR

## — NORWICH EARLY SETTLEMENT —

*A Companion to the Norwich Historic Audio Tours*

### 1 **The River** *Stop at the Railroad Station near the Lewiston Lot or where you can see the river.*

Foley Park is at the confluence of the Connecticut River and Blood Brook. Abenaki people fished along the banks of the *Kwanitekw* or “Long River.” In 1765 the families of Nathan Messenger and Samuel Hutchinson were the first English settlers to winter over in a log hut here on the point, where the bridge now lands on the Norwich side.

### 2 **Hatch-Peisch House** . . . . .

*236 US Route 5*

This 1773 house is said to be the first frame house in Norwich, built by Joseph Hatch, who came to Norwich from Connecticut in the 1760s. In 1768 the first town meeting was held in Joseph Hatch’s cabin, near the site of this house.



### 3 **Ferry Place**

This area at the foot of Loveland Road was known as “Ferry Place.” In 1790 the first ferry was replaced by a rope ferry. Loveland Road originally led to what was once Norwich Center. Rope Ferry Road, across the river, led to the middle of Hanover.

### 4 **Slafter House** . . . . .

*708 Goodrich Four Corners Road*

In 1768, after the end of the French and Indian War, John Slafter moved to this land away from the banks of the river and began to build this house, hewing the heavy timbers that made up the frame with a broad-axe. He maintained a subsistence farm here for the rest of his life.



### 5 **Meeting House Hill**

Considered to be the geographical center of the town, this area was known as “The Center.” Norwich’s first meeting house was built just south of the burial ground, completed in 1785. That year Norwich hosted the Vermont state legislature, which held sessions in the meeting house for 16 days.

### 6 **Meeting House Farm** . . . . .

*128 Union Village Road*

This grand Georgian-style house was built by Constant Murdock. Inside there is a central hall with a gracious staircase capped with a palladian window. Eighteenth-century landscape murals survive in two of the rooms. It is said that the lumber from the old meeting house was used to partially build Murdock’s barn, thus the name “Meeting House Farm.”



### 7 **Captain Paul Brigham House** . . . . .

*211 Brigham Hill Road*

This cluster of homes all once belonged to the Brigham family. Captain Paul Brigham, a Revolutionary War soldier, came to Norwich in 1782, bringing his wife Lydia and family with him. He served 22 terms as Vermont’s lieutenant governor. The Brigham family had a very close relationship with local Abenaki people and visits to the farm by an Abenaki extended family continued into the 1920s and 1930s.



### \* **Norwich Historical Society** . . . . .

*277 Main Street*

This home was built by Joseph Burton, here on what was once called “Burton’s Plain” or “the Plain.” Two rooms on the north side of the house became William Lewis’s town clerk’s office for 49 years. The house is now the location of Norwich Historical Society.



**Norwich Historical Society**  
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Credits: Historic Preservation Commission, Town of Norwich • Norwich Historical Society • CATV

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