

Hillside Cemetery Tour

By Lauren Pidgeon, Summer 2022



Introduction to Hillside Cemetery:

The Hillside-Loveland Cemetery is the largest cemetery in Norwich with over 2,000 sites. This land was previously owned by the Loveland family, hence the name, and the cemetery was first used in 1827. The left side of the cemetery was used as a ski area in the 1940s and 1950s but now is filled with newer graves.

As you walk around, you'll see that almost all of these graves are made of granite. Earlier New England settlers used fieldstone or slate but because this graveyard dates from the early 19th century the primary stone being used is granite.

1. **Richard Cossingham: 1835-1906:**

Enter the gates of the cemetery and take the road on the right. Head straight along that road keeping an eye out on the right side for Richard Cossingham who is buried next to his wife Gertie Trescott.



Richard Cossingham was born into slavery in Virginia on December 15, 1835. After he was freed as a young boy, he became a cook on a steamship and worked all through the Civil War, cooking for soldiers. He moved to Norwich with his two sons in 1883 to work for Dartmouth professor Elihu Thayer Quimby as a chef. His two sons began a farm on Cossingham Road which eventually became one of the most successful dairy farms in Norwich. Richard eventually became a chef for the Newton Inn (the Norwich Inn) and worked there until his death in 1906.

2. Pauper's Area:

Carry on straight and head off the road towards the corner of the cemetery where you'll find a shaded area filled with smaller graves and markers. This is the Pauper's Area.



The Pauper's area contains approximately 41 occupants and about 30 stones. There are only 25 names that can be identified and except for one small child, all of the occupants were over 27 years old. Many of the poor members of Norwich worked on the Town Farm which was located near Goodrich Four Corners. The Town Farm provided lodging and work for paupers. The town funds helped people in need and there are records of these funds paying for cemetery stones. Some of the people in the Hillside Pauper's area may have worked at the Town Farm during their time in Norwich.

The Town Farm was purchased in the 1840s. In 1844 there were 24 paupers at the Farm. That number soon declined, there seldom being as many as 8 in any one year for the rest of its history. The Overseers of the Poor reports describe many of the paupers as old and infirm, past the ability to labor. In 1923 the Town Farm was sold.

3. Albert Messenger: 1832-1889

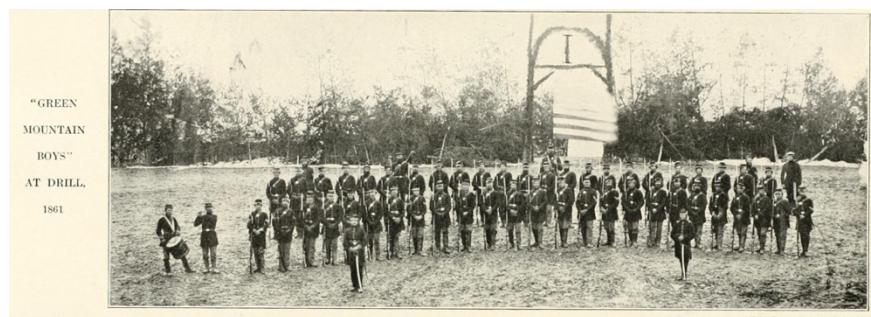
Head back to the road and walk up past a few rows until you reach Albert Messenger's gravestone on the right, decorated with an American flag.



Albert Messenger was one of the many soldiers from Norwich who fought for the Union in the Civil War. Albert and his younger brothers George, Charles, and Frank all wrote an assortment of letters to their family back in Norwich during their time in the war. Albert, along with other men from Norwich, was assigned to the Vermont Sixth Regiment, Company B. In a letter to his wife, Albert writes that he visited the hospital where he found a fellow Norwich resident whose leg was injured. He explains the interaction and writes that the man is “pretty cheerful... and pretty glad to see me”. Community in Norwich extends much further than just the boundaries of the town as Albert makes clear in his letter.

and put turpentine in it to kill the maggots. And when I tell you that 1 night and one day that he lay on the ground, it rained hard, you will think that he must be pretty tough to live through it. He was pretty cheerful yesterday and pretty glad to see me, I can tell you. He thinks that he shall get along now if nothing new takes hold.

This is an image of the
Vermont 6th, Regiment D.



4. Ford Sayre: 1909-1944

Follow the road all the way around and up to the top part of the cemetery and take the first right on an overgrown road. After a slight bend in the road, turn right onto the grass, just past the small maple tree to find Ford Sayre's gravestone, decorated with an American flag.



Ford Sayre was introduced to Norwich when he moved to Hanover as an undergraduate at Dartmouth. He developed a strong love for skiing and decided to stay in Hanover and work at the Hanover Inn. It was during these years that Ford and his wife Peggy decided to create a skiing school for local kids who couldn't afford skiing equipment. When World War II began, Ford enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was sadly killed in a crash during a War Bond Drive exhibition. His wife continued the skiing school and founded the Ford Sayre Memorial Ski Council. In the 1940s and 1950s, The Ford Sayre Ski Club used what is now the left side of Hillside Cemetery as a community ski hill.

This is an image of the Sub-Junior Ford Sayre Ski team in 1948, four years after Ford Sayre's death.

5. Daniel Stewart Fraser: 1912 - 2009

Head back to the overgrown road and follow it up and around a bend to get back to the central road of the graveyard. Carry on straight, with the fence to your right and stop at the second central road. Take a moment here to look out over the mountains where you should be able to see both Norwich and Hanover church spires. The closest gravestone to your right is Daniel Fraser's gravestone.



At the age of 20, Daniel Fraser started work at Merrill's General store where he and Whit Hicks ran a delivery service. The two young men would spend the morning traveling around town taking orders from local families and then in the afternoon they would deliver the groceries. In 1955, Dan and Whit (the names everyone knew them by) bought the store from A.H. Merrill who had started the business in 1891 and was now retiring. At that time, customers read their shopping lists to the

person behind the counter and the employee would then rush around the store fetching the items. According to Whit Hicks, this soon became tiring because people changed their minds and wanted to add more to their purchase. In 1972, Whit retired and sold the store to Dan Fraser. Dan & Whit's is still in the Fraser family and is an important part of the Norwich community.

The image on the left is Daniel Fraser and Whit Hicks taken in the late 50s/ early 60s. The image on the right is Dan & Whit's employees outside the store in 1961. Whit Hicks is first on the left and Daniel Fraser is in the middle.



6. Marion Cross: 1907-1996

Keep following the road and take the next left. Walk down past approximately 5 rows and keep an eye out on your left for Harold and Marion Cross's stone which is in the middle of the row.



Marion Cross came to Norwich in 1932 and began teaching seventh and eighth grade at the brick village school which is now part of the elementary school. In 1951, the last one-room schoolhouse in Norwich closed so the village school had to expand. Tracy Hall became an extension of the Norwich school with Marion Cross as Principal-Teacher. Finally, more classrooms were added to the Norwich school and after 44 years with Marion Cross as Principal, the people of Norwich voted to name the school after her. She was known to be open minded and encouraged her students and teachers to be curious and to respond to change. It seems more than fitting that the center of the Norwich community and the school that teaches the next generation of Norwich should be named after such a passionate and influential person.

The picture on the right was taken in 1961 for the *Vermont Life Magazine*.



7. Basil Milovsoroff: 1906-1992

Turn back up towards the fence and at the intersection, take a left. This road will take you around the edge of the graveyard. After the bend, keep a lookout on your left side for a small rugged, mountain shaped granite stone of Basil Milovsoroff.



Basil Milovsoroff was born in Siberia in 1906 and studied at Oberlin college where he met his wife and developed an interest in marionettes and puppets. He toured for 20 years with his wife and puppets, performing at schools, camps, and theaters. He moved to Norwich in the 1940s and became a Dartmouth professor of Russian in the late 1950s. He was one of several professors who left Europe during the War, settling in Norwich. In 1983, he received the President's Award of the Puppeteers of America.

This picture was taken in 1950.

8. **Lillian Steel Loveland (1873-1958)**

Then follow the road back down towards the entrance to the cemetery. Once you've reached the lower part of the cemetery, on the last stretch of road before the gate, keep an eye out for the Loveland stone which is in the middle of a row on the left. Lilly Ann's stone is next to the large Loveland monument.



Lillian Loveland was well known for her travels around the world documented in Upper Valley newspapers. She wrote a book about one of her most famous adventures called *Around the World on a Freighter at 76* which won first prize in the Association of American Travel Agents' Contest. Her trip took her across the Pacific to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Hawaii. On another trip, Mrs. Loveland rode a cargo liner called the "President Jefferson" which visited Korea, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Italy, and Spain. Mrs. Loveland was also known for riding a horse 6 miles on her 80th birthday, holding tea visits at her house in Norwich, and for having her own beach built on the Connecticut River. Lillian and her husband George retired to Norwich and lived on Loveland farm, now known as Riverview farm, from 1930 to 1955.

I hope you enjoyed this cemetery tour and stay tuned for more!