



# Norway Museum & Historical Society

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**November 2022**

## Main Street Walking Tour a Success

Our latest collaboration with the First Universalist Church of Norway proved to be very popular.

The Norway History Walking Tour of Main Street was so well received, folks are already asking about next year. Plans are in the works.

We thank all our tour guides and reenactors, as well as The Tribune Bookstore for being our ticket agent.



Reenactors left to right:

David Drago as Frank Stone; Pat Shearman as Stella Prince; Phil Cosman as L.M. Longley; Ben Tucker as Cyrus Tucker; Peter Hammond as Fred Sanborn; Joanne McDonald as Laura Sanborn; Stuart Goodwin as his grandfather Stuart Goodwin



Sue Denison giving an introduction before a tour group sets off.

NMHS  
Annual Meeting  
Saturday,  
January 21, 2023

We expect to be in person.  
Mark your calendars and  
details will be announced  
soon.

Hello Friends/Members of NMHS,

I am pleased to report that we resumed our pre-covid schedule this past summer. Not only were we open on both Tuesdays and Saturdays, but we launched our docent program as well. Six volunteers were trained to be available during our public open hours to greet visitors and assist the curators. Our new docents all reported favorably on this experience, and we thank them for providing this service.

They were: Barbara Howard, Jancie Partridge, Cindy Reedy, Brad Cummings, Patty Watts, and Dennis Gray as well as board of trustee members Bruce Watts, Marcy Gray, Dennise Whitley, Brian Partridge, and Ann Sickman.

We expect to continue this program, and welcome others to participate. If you are interested please contact the historical society by email.

We also resumed our schedule of programs this past summer, and enjoyed presentations by: Peter Hammond, Chris Van Curan, and Herb Adams.

Peter presented interesting items from the historical society's collection of Norway artifacts. His items included the Bunker Hill cannon ball, a Vivian Akers life mask, and the steam whistle from the Pennesseewassee Steamer.

Chris talked about his grandfather, Regnal Dinsmore who wrote many outdoor adventure stories (see photo below.) He also sold copies of his recently published book, Top Notch Stories, which is a compilation of some of Reg's stories.

Herb's program was postponed from Maine's Bicentennial in 2020. He took us back to 1820 in Maine and discussed the issues regarding statehood.

We are already looking forward to next summer's programs and we are working on some interesting topics.

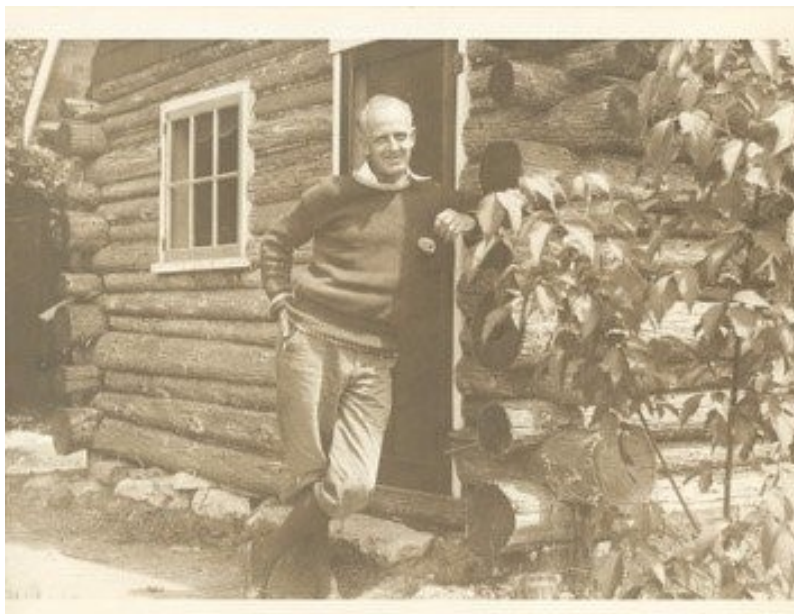


Photo of Regnal Dinsmore, 1885-1960, the subject of our July program with the Norway Memorial Library.



# My Favorite Things

*by Susan Denison, Curator/ Collection Manager*

Harry Ross (1914 – 1992) was a native of Old Saybrook, CT, moving to Norway in the 1960s. He was a self-taught wood carver, starting with duck decoys when he was about 12 years old. He wanted to go duck hunting, but couldn't afford to buy a decoy, so he carved his own. 20-plus years later, Harry was named world champion wood carver by the International Decoy Makers Association. After finishing school, Harry had a "normal" career for 20 years. After he retired, he started carving all species of birds full time and never stopped. Many of his creations were special orders, for customers like Clark Gable, Roy Rogers, Ernest Hemingway, and the Jim Beam Company.

We have three Harry Ross carved birds in our collection, given to us by Donald F. McAllister in 1986. His carvings are clearly the work of a master. I think they are stunning, with their intricate detail and vibrant color. The next time you visit, be sure and ask about the Ross birds. You'll understand why they are among my favorite things.



# News from Bygone Days

*Researched by Ed Staples, Trustee*

From: The *Oxford Democrat*, August 6, 1901 Page 3

Editor Democrat:

Why not have an old ladies' home for the county of Oxford? It would fill a long felt want, and be an honor to the county and a blessing to those who have no home of their own in their declining years.

Why not make the old Horne homestead of Norway Village such a home? No place in the county is better adapted to the wants of such a home. With 22 rooms, mostly furnished with hot and cold water now, it could be bought at a reasonable figure and put in shape for immediate use at a small expense. Such a thing has been talked of a little and I am informed Mrs. Horne would like to see it done.

Let us hear from the good people of the county. I have heard two say they would furnish a room and your humble servant another. Now is the time to move, as this property will be changed within a year.

R.

*From the publication of that letter to the editor in 1901, through its 1903 opening, activities surrounding the creation of Norway's "Old Ladies' Home" were regularly reported:*

May 19, 1903 *Oxford Democrat*: The Old Ladies' Home is to become a real home. The necessary funds, \$2500, to purchase the John L. Horne house have been subscribed by 32 Norway ladies and the property had been conveyed to its new owners. It only remains now to furnish and maintain the place after it has been put into suitable condition for inmates



A small souvenir china dish. Gift of Bonnie Hall.

August 18, 1903 Oxford Democrat: The Old Ladies' Home is a sure thing. It will be opened formally on Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>. Active work is being done to obtain contribution of all useful things. Money as well as household goods of every description will be received.

September 1, 1903 Oxford Democrat: All persons interested in the good and welfare of the Old Ladies' Home are invited to attend a basket picnic donation party, Tuesday Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, to be held at the home. Each is specially invited to bring something as a contribution to the home. The party will be an all-day one and the management expect it will be largely and generously attended.

*After the home opened, finances were always a concern. The Oxford Democrat published several pleas for subscribers or other assistance. Then, in December 1903, a fire started in the second floor parlor that caused quite a bit of property damage in several rooms, but fortunately, there were no injuries. The cause was never determined, but there were rumors that it was arson. Within a week, work was under way to repair smoke and water damage.*

*The April 23, 1904 Lewiston Evening Journal Magazine section published a lengthy feature article describing a large, attractive, and pleasant "Norway Home for Aged Ladies." The story touts the quality of the building, especially the plumbing, saying "more lead pipe was used than any two houses of its size in this village and some idea of the perfect water system may be gotten from the fact that there are 32 faucets in the house," and "all rooms have access to heat" as well as "every sleeping room has hot and cold water." At the time, there were eight residents, or "inmates," as they were called then, with two vacancies yet to be filled. A married couple, Mr. & Mrs. Page, were the superintendent and matron.*

*The Home was not financially successful and closed in the summer of 1905, due to lack of operating funds. The building reverted to a private residence until it became the original structure of Stephens Memorial Hospital in the late 1950s. Ultimately, the Old Ladies' Home was razed during renovation and expansion of the hospital.*



The former Old Ladies' Home was part of the original Stephens Memorial Hospital.

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From our collection of vintage postcards. c1910

## Board of Trustees:

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Susan Denison, Curator/Collection Manager	

## Our Mission:

*The mission of the Society is to bring people together to share, celebrate and learn about Norway's heritage, by collecting, caring for and exhibiting Norway's historical treasures; by facilitating the collection of and research into family and local history; and by providing programs that make our history meaningful that engage people of all ages.*

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