

## 2017 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

### Norway Temperance Hall

3650 E. 2631<sup>st</sup> Road, Norway (Unincorporated), LaSalle County



*Credit: David Johnson*

In the unincorporated town of Norway, residents have identified a small hall that tells the story of the temperance movement as part of the Norwegian-American experience. Under the leadership of the Norwegian Center Incorporated, the group seeks to save the Norway Temperance Hall and repurpose it as a community gathering space. The building, which has been for sale in the past but is currently off the market, continues to deteriorate from water infiltration and is shifting in its foundation, creating visible cracking rising up the walls.

Built in 1909 by the Methodist Church, the Norway Temperance Hall served as a social and educational center in the community. The temperance movement began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as a social movement against the consumption of alcohol, often with community halls hosting educational events and serving as gathering spaces in place of taverns. The movement faded in the 1930s with the repeal of prohibition in the United States.

The Norway Temperance Hall is listed in the National Register as a contributing building to the Norway Historic District. The one-story building has exterior walls of clay tile and sits on a poured concrete foundation. Design flaws have caused the building to shift, resulting in cracking in the walls. Threatened by water infiltration, the interior includes the historic ticket booth, built-in shelves, wood floors and stamped metal ceiling.

Given the rapid rate of deterioration, the Norwegian Center Incorporated is seeking to secure ownership of the building and stabilize the foundation. With support from the local Norsk Museum in Sheridan and the Norway Improvement League, the Norwegian Center Inc. hopes to leverage partnerships and community support to save this community landmark.

#### What you can do:

- Make a donation to the Norsk Museum: <http://www.nnleague.org/norskmuseum.html>
- Visit and support the Norsk Museum: <http://www.norskmuseum.org/>