



**For Immediate Release**

**Date:** Tuesday, 9/15/15

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**Norwegian Red Hook WaterStories, a night of bluegrass music - and history**  
**Thursday, September 24, 2015 from 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM**

At [Atelier Roquette](#), 63 Commerce Street, Red Hook, Brooklyn, NY 11231

Tickets \$15 on sale at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/norwegian-red-hook-waterstories-a-night-of-bluegrass-music-and-history-tickets-18595385298>

Love bluegrass? History buff? Interested in New York City's waterfront? PortSide NewYork has combined it all in one special night for you! Nestle in a sofa or dance into the night at the NYC premiere of the great bluegrass band [Paradise Mountain Boys](#) from Norway - and get yourself a NY WaterStory! Produced by PortSide NewYork as part of our ongoing Red Hook WaterStories.

You will be surrounded by projections of vintage film and photos on the brick walls as you soak up the maritime history of Norwegians in Red Hook and New York harbor. Norwegians were one of the major immigrant groups in Brooklyn from the late 19th to early 20th century. They were a major presence on NYC's working waterfront and on our historic ship, [the tanker MARY A. WHALEN](#). They were first concentrated in Red Hook, Brooklyn. At their peak, there were almost as many Norwegians in Red Hook as there are residents in Red Hook today.

Hear about the first people to row across the Atlantic, Norwegians in 1896! And how Norwegian seaman stranded in here toughed it out in a Red Hook shanty town until Robert Moses cleared it out. and how Norwegians were a major presence on our historic ship the Mary A. Whalen .

**BIO OF BAND PARADISE MOUNTAIN BOYS**

This is the NYC premier of the Paradise Mountain Boys! The band plays bluegrass the traditional way with all the band members around one microphone. Their six-piece acoustic outfit of mandolin, dobro, banjo, guitar and upright bass has its roots firmly planted in down-home acoustic music found in the Appalachian mountains. Traditional bluegrass and bluegrass gospel, with beautiful harmony singing is their thing.

**Event Schedule**

The evening kicks off with speakers covering various aspects of the Norwegian New Yorker experience, then the NYC premier of the Paradise Mountain Boys, a bluegrass band from Norway! Contribute your

**PortSide NewYork, aboard the tanker MARY A. WHALEN**  
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own WaterStory at our StoryStation. Read paper and digital Norwegian New Yorker history at our ReadingTable.

**7:00-7:45pm** Three short history talks with slides. Speakers Lars Nilsen of the Norwegian Immigrant Association, Victor Samuelsen of the Norwegian Seaman's Church, John Weaver of PortSide NewYork.

**8:00-9:45pm** bluegrass music by Paradise Mountain Boys from Norway

**9:45-10:30pm** time to talk to the historians and band, read history at our ReadingTable, get interviewed at our WaterStories StoryStation, sign up to be interviewed in the future.

### **History program**

Historical overview by Lars Nilsen, Co-Chair of the Norwegian Immigrant Association

Victor Samuelsen will talk about the first people to row across the Atlantic, two Norwegians George Harbo & Frank Samuelsen who did that in an open boat - in 1896!

PortSide NewYork board member John Weaver will talk about his father in law Alf Dyrland who left Norway as a cabin boy at age 13 and was captain of our ship MARY A. WHALEN from 1958 to 1978, one of many Norwegians to work on the MARY and for the two companies for which the MARY worked most of her years, Ira S. Bushey & Sons in Red Hook and Ekloff in Staten Island.

The 1931 silent film "Glimpses of Old New York" playing on the walls is by Engineer Michael Leirvik, shot to show Norwegians how their emigrants brethren lived in NYC and especially Brooklyn, courtesy of Norsk Film Institut, Oslo, with the permission of the Leirvik Family.

### **Quotes**

"One hundred plus years ago, Red Hook ( including what is now Carroll Gardens ) was the center of a hard-working maritime-related Norwegian speaking community of about 10,000 people" said Lars Nilsen, Co-Chairman of the Norwegian Immigrant Association.

"In 1896, George Harbo (Sandefjord, Norway) and Frank Samuelsen (my hometown Farsund, Norway) crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 55 days by rowing an open boat without sail or rudder," said Victor Samuelsen a board member of the Norwegian Seaman's Church who has dedicated himself to getting the great row remembered and memorialized. " It took 114 years to break this record, and now on the eve of their 120th Anniversary, I am very pleased to see a fitting monument statue has been sculpted in their honor."

John Weaver, son in law of Alf Dryland, deceased Captain of PortSide NewYork's flagship the Mary A. Whalen said "Norwegians in America playing Blue Grass music! If Alf Dyrland were still with us he would be smiling. Every new adventure is the continuation of his dream come true. He would be proud of the heritage celebrated and future welcomed aboard his Mary Whalen. Thank you PortSide NewYork."

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## **Event Partners**

Norwegian Consulate of New York, Norwegian Immigrant Association, Norwegian Seaman's Church, Norsk Film Institut, Oslo

## **Thanks**

Profuse thanks to the Paradise Mountain Boys for donating this concert. This is another "Artists for PortSide" event where artists donate their work to PortSide NewYork.

Thanks for funding support from Councilman Carlos Menchaca and for tech support from Hughes Media Group and Pioneer Works and venue Atelier Roquette.

## **The Venue**

The venue Atelier Roquette was generously donated by the dynamic duo Monica Byrne and Leisah Swenson, the force behind three businesses, Atelier Roquette, home/made and Roquette Catering whose flair has converted a former forge, ice cream warehouse and espresso machine repair shop into Atelier Roquette, a cozy, airy nest for brunch, weddings and community events. The esthetic here is an exquisite balancing of flowers and rust, linen and stainless with notes of rustic wood with an eclectic mix of chairs, tables and lounge spaces. Check out the interior courtyard with blooming oranges and roses!

Proceeds and donations from the evening support future Red Hook WaterStories programs.

## **About PortSide NewYork Red Hook WaterStories**

This event is part of PortSide NewYork's ongoing [Red Hook WaterStories](#) project which tells the history of the Red Hook peninsula along a water theme, including early Dutch tidal mills, shipyards and ports, nature, real estate development, squatters, illness, crime, harbor connections to unexpected things, and contemporary maritime activities ashore and visible from our shore. It tells of Red Hook's greatness: when the port of Brooklyn was a place of international importance, and the best in the region from the mid-1800's until the mid 1900's, its heart was in Red Hook. From this content, PortSide makes school programs, public programs, digital and paper Red Hook maps and guides, and the research also informs our advocacy and neighborhood promotion work.

## **About PortSide NewYork [www.portsidenewyork.org](http://www.portsidenewyork.org)**

PortSide NewYork is a living lab for better urban waterways. PortSide NewYork brings WaterStories to life. PortSide shows how to combine the working waterfront, public access and community development. We bring the communities afloat (maritime) and ashore closer together to the benefit of both. PortSide NewYork works to activate NYC's waterfront, especially the BLUEspace or water part of it.

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