

CONNECTICUT

HISTORY
DAY

Connecticut Topic List

2020-21 School Year

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY 2021

Communication in History:

THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING

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Using this Guide

Connecticut History Day has developed this guide to help assist students and teachers in researching Connecticut topics for the upcoming National History Day season. This guide catalogues topics and chronological order with tags to help students find themes. To search tags, hold CTRL+F and search for the following tags:

#abolition	#military
#agriculture	#nature
#art	#nauticalhistory
#blackhistory	#preservation
#civilwar	#religion
#commerce	#revolutionarywar
#education	#slavery
#health	#socialreform
#indigenouspeoples	#suffrage
#innovation	#technology
#journalism	#travel
#labor	#voting
#latinahistory	#womenshistory
#latinohistory	#worldwar1
#latinxhistory	#worldwar2
#law	

Colonial Settlement (pre-1775)

Samson Occom and the Brotherton Indians

Samson Occom was a Mohegan educator and Presbyterian minister who advocated for indigenous education reform. Traditional practices were important to indigenous cultures, and Occom argued that Mohegan students should learn from indigenous teachers, rather than Anglo-American teachers who saw Native traditions as dangerous. He gathered a group of Christian Indians from across southern New England relocated to New York, where they joined Christian Mohawks to found the Brotherton Indian Nation.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/samson-occom-and-the-brotherton-indians/>

Tags: #indigenousteoples #education #religion

The Life of Venture Smith

Venture Smith was kidnapped from a royal family in Africa and placed in slavery in Connecticut. He had many horrible interactions with slave owners, but he eventually persevered, purchasing his and his family's freedom, and acquiring property and the respect of his local community. Venture Smith was able to pass on his story so that generations of Connecticutans and American readers can learn the horrors that he endured.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/venture-smith-from-slavery-to-freedom/>

Tags: #slavery #blackhistory

The Great River: Connecticut's Main Stream

Highway. Barrier. Resource. Sewer. Over the centuries each of these names has been used to describe the Connecticut River. This prominent feature of the state's physical landscape also provides a reference point for our sense of place. The river's role in Connecticut's history has changed over time. Native Americans and early settlers used it for fishing as well as for local transportation and communication; later generations saw it as a conduit of wealth, facilitating commerce with other American colonies, England, and, most importantly, the West Indies. From the river's mouth vessels carried the agricultural and forest bounty of the hinterland to far-flung ports across the Atlantic world. They returned to the river with more than just rum and molasses; they carried news and ideas from other parts of the world as well.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-great-river-connecticuts-main-stream/>

Tags: #nature #preservation #indigenousteoples #commerce #agriculture

Scrimshaw Tells the Story of Sailors at Sea

Scrimshaw is thought to come from the Dutch for "idle fellow." The term has come to include anything made from marine mammals. While the craft was certainly useful for occupying the ship's crew on long voyages, it also serves as visual history of the whaling. Sailors often depicted nautical motifs inspired by things they experienced during their voyage, giving a glimpse into their daily life at sea.

Learn more: <https://stories.mysticseaport.org/scrimshaw-mystic-seaport/>

Tags: #nauticalhistory #art

Mapmaking Helps Communicate the Landscape of the State

At first, there were only the mental maps of the Native Americans, who easily traveled the whole region we now call Connecticut, along lightly marked trails, from memory. Connecticut's first formal cartographers were Europeans working in the 17th century to record and capture the details they considered important, mainly to help lay claim to territory for their nations. The earliest locally produced maps exist only as manuscripts, their makers usually anonymous, ranging from rough sketches to visually sophisticated renderings of the landscape as seen by the mapmaker. Scattered across town, state, and private collections, they provide valuable glimpses of events great and small in Connecticut history.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/exploring-early-connecticut-mapmaking/>

Tags: #innovation #indigenouspeoples #education #nature #preservation #agriculture #art #socialreform #travel #technology

Revolutionary War and a New Nation (1775-1812)

Caleb Brewster and the Culper Spy Ring

Caleb Brewster joined Benjamin Tallmadge and others to form the Culper Spy Ring, General George Washington's first successful network of spies during the Revolutionary War. As a Long Island whale ship captain, Brewster transported vital information from New York City to Tallmadge in the Bridgeport and Fairfield areas of Connecticut. The British discovered that Brewster was a spy, but he managed to evade capture and continued the important work of transporting information between Connecticut and NYC.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/caleb-brewster-and-the-culper-spy-ring/>

Tags: #revolutionarywar #military

Communicating the Evils of Drink

In 1784, Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, treasurer of the United States Mint, and nationally recognized physician, published an article titled *An Inquiry into the Effects of Spirituous Liquors on the Human Body and the Mind*. The article was expanded into a book in 1790 and widely published throughout the United States. His findings galvanized local ministers, medical professionals, and ordinary citizens to publicly advocate for the restriction and even complete abolition of the manufacture, sale, and use of alcoholic beverages.

Learn more: <http://ctexplored.org/re-collections-flying-the-banner-for-temperance>

Tags: #health #socialreform

Keeping the Country Informed During Conflict: Hannah Bunce Watson

Hannah Bunce Watson became the publisher of *The Connecticut Courant* at a remarkable moment in American history. The year was 1777, George Washington was not yet President, and Jonathan Trumbull was Governor of Connecticut. A fledgling nation was emerging, and its patriots needed to know what was going on in the world. Boston papers had been shut down by the British, and in New York on Tory papers were being published. *The Courant*, then the oldest and largest newspaper in the colonies (8,000 circulation), was the only one that could keep them informed.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/hannah-bunce-watson-one-of-americas-first-female-publishers/>

Tags: #womenshistory #revolutionarywar #journalism

The "Conference" State

France's decision to assist the struggling Continental Army was predicated on the belief that helping the Americans win their independence was a way to cripple Great Britain. But the French Army would have to cross Connecticut to achieve that goal. For its role as a central location for plotting how and where the French and Americans would confront the British, the Constitution State could well have been called "The Conference State."

Learn more: <https://www.ctexplored.org/the-conference-state/>

Tags: #revolutionarywar #travel #military

Voyage of the Neptune

In the world of globalization today, what was it like to trade between nations in the 18th century? The Neptune was the most successful trading voyage to ever leave the port of New Haven, a sailing to China and back between a two year period, 1796-99.

Learn more: <https://todayinhistory.com/2019/07/11/july-11-the-voyage-of-the-neptune-reaps-astonishing-wealth/>

Tags: #nauticalhistory #commerce #travel

1790s Yellow Fever outbreak

After the American Revolution, New Haven was hit with an outbreak of Yellow Fever. It had a devastating toll on the population of the community and was traced to a ship that brought goods from the West Indies. Out of this tragedy, the first sanitation community was formed and communicated healthy practices to the City of New Haven.

Learn more: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/nyregion/the-nations-first-planned-burial-ground.html>

Tags: #health #socialreform #commerce

Stagecoaches and the Lines of Communication

The first stagecoaches appeared briefly in Connecticut in the years immediately preceding the American Revolution. They operated on the Upper Post Road from New York to Boston and from Hartford southeast to Norwich and Providence. Interrupted by the war, stagecoach service resumed in the last decade of the 18th century. Thereafter, it spread rapidly with the proliferation of the turnpike roads that made stage service faster and more reliable. The establishment of numerous local post offices and the expansion of postal service throughout the new nation between 1792 and 1828 also facilitated the spread of stagecoach travel. Indeed, the spread of turnpikes, postal routes, and stagecoach service together created the nation's first communication network, over which the latest in news and commerce arrived in most every community of any size with the weekly stage.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/stagecoach-travel-sustained-commerce-and-communication-in-1800s/>

Tags: #commerce #travel #preservation

Lighthouses Find a Way to Light Up Communication

Approximately 3 ½ miles off the coast of Guilford lies the Faulkner's Island Lighthouse. The state's second-oldest lighthouse tower, the octagonal-shaped, 46-foot-high structure landed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 in part for its unique contribution to maritime safety testing. Now Connecticut's only active island-based light tower, the Faulkner's island lighthouse continues to warn ships away from the island's rocky shoals much as it did over 200 years ago.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/improving-sea-transportation-guilford-goes-about-it-the-light-way/>

Tags: #nauticalhistory #commerce #preservation #travel #nature

Jupiter Hammon Communicates Antislavery Protest through Poetry

Born on October 17, 1711, Hammon lived on Huntington, Long Island, where he worked as a slave for four generations of the Lloyd family. During the American Revolution he was removed to Connecticut by the family when the British occupation of Huntington exiled them from their home. While in Hartford, Hammon published works including "An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatly" in 1778, "An Essay on the Ten Virgins" in 1779, and "A Winter Piece" in 1782. Hammon is also recognized as being one of the first to write about black theology and is credited with influencing antislavery protest literature in America.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/hartford-publishes-the-first-literary-work-by-an-african-american-who-knew/>

Tags: #slavery #blackhistory #art #socialreform #labor

The Hartford Wits

Poets are sometimes as important in telling the story of a nation as historians. This is especially true of poets and painters who come of age during the revolution that births a nation. Such was the case with the Hartford Wits—a talented group of writers greatly influenced by the struggle of the American colonies for independence from Britain.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-hartford-wits/>

Tags: #revolutionarywar #art #education #socialreform #

The Era of Reform (1813-1859)

The Bemans: A Family of Reformers

The Beman Family rose to prominence in Middletown's African American community, leading the A.M.E. Zion Church and fighting for black rights leading up to the Civil War. The family includes Caesar Beman, who had been a slave in Colchester before being emancipated in 1781; Jehiel Beman, who was a pastor who spoke in favor of abolition and assisted runaway slaves on the underground railroad; and his son Amos, who also fought for abolition alongside his father.

Learn more: <https://www.courant.com/community/middletown/hc-middletown-beman-family--20190928-pcctbxnngbdvzf5wpeiuncqxpq-story.html>

Tags: #religion #blackhistory #civilwar #slavery #abolition

The Heathen School of Cornwall

The Heathen School was a school in Cornwall, CT, designed to educate people considered, at that time, to be heathens: people from Hawaii, China, and India as well as Indigenous Peoples. There may have been triumphs for teachers who thought they were "civilizing backwards" peoples, and perhaps for some students who were gaining some skills they could use to help their communities navigate the 19th century would but there were also tragedies when teachers realized that many students stubbornly refused to give up all of their cultural ways, and for students who found their cultures under assault.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/an-experiment-in-evangelization-cornwalls-foreign-mission-school/>

Tags: #indigenouspeoples #socialreform #education

The Wadsworth Atheneum Breaks the Barrier of Art for the Public

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art was founded in 1842 by Daniel Wadsworth, one of the first major American art patrons. Founded with a vision for infusing art into the American experience, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is home to a collection of nearly 50,000 works of art, spanning 5,000 years and encompassing European art from antiquity to contemporary as well as American art from the 1600s through today. The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is the oldest continuously-operating public art museum in the United States, opening its doors to the public in 1844.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-wadsworth-atheneum-museum-of-art/>

Tags: #art #preservation #socialreform

James Mars' Words Illuminate the Cruelty of Slavery in New England

James Mars was born into slavery in Connecticut during gradual emancipation. When he turned 21 he successfully petitioned the state for his freedom, becoming an advocate for free men and women in the state. In his later years, he wrote a memoir of his experiences because he wanted to make sure that people remembered that slavery had once existed in Connecticut.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/james-mars-words-illuminate-the-cruelty-of-slavery-in-new-england/>

Tags: #slavery #blackhistory #abolition

Hartford's First African American Church

In 1819, a group of African Americans in Hartford grew weary of being assigned seats in the galleries and in the rear of churches and decided to begin worshipping on their own in the conference room of the First Church of Christ, now Center Church, in Hartford. This would become the first black Congregational Church in Connecticut, the third oldest in the nation.

Learn more: <http://ctexplored.org/faith-congregational-church-185-years-same-people-same-purpose/>

Tags: #blackhistory #abolition #religion #socialreform

Jews in Early Connecticut

Jews appear to have been scarce in colonial Hartford: the earliest recorded mention of a Jew in the city, "David the Jew," occurred in 1659 and vital records from 1667 note the presence of "Jacob the Jew," a horse dealer. They continued to be a tiny minority in Hartford until about the second quarter of the 19th century and were not permitted to openly worship, even after

Congregationalism's reign as the official religion of Connecticut ended in 1818. By the early 1840s, Connecticut's Jews, a group that was predominantly German before the 1880s, had successfully established themselves in the social and business life of both Hartford and New Haven but were not allowed full religious equality in Connecticut.

Learn more: <https://ctexplored.org/making-their-presence-known/>

Tags: #religion #socialreform #law

Blacksmith Isaac Glasko Challenges the State Constitution

Isaac Glasko was an African American/Native American blacksmith from Griswold who petitioned the CT General Assembly to change the state constitution: in 1823 he argued that since black men and women were not allowed to vote, African American businesses should not have to pay state taxes.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/blacksmith-isaac-glasko-challenges-the-state-constitution/>

Tags: #law #blackhistory #indigenouspeoples #socialreform #commerce

Ebenezer Bassett

Ebenezer Bassett became the first African American student to graduate from the New Britain Normal School – now Central Connecticut State University, in 1853. After graduating, Bassett became a noted educator, abolitionist, and the first African American ambassador to a foreign nation for the United States when he was stationed in Haiti.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/ebenezer-bassetts-historic-journey/>

Tags: #education #blackhistory #abolition

Establishing the American School for the Deaf

Established in 1817 by Thomas Gallaudet, the American School for the Deaf (ASD) was the first permanent school in the United States for students who are hearing impaired. The school allowed students to learn new forms of communication and inspired many other schools to open.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/gallaudets-vision-advances-deaf-education/>

Tags: #education #socialreform

Noah Webster: Father of American Copyright Law

Noah Webster was a political activist, a newspaper editor, a founder of Amherst College, and an early antislavery advocate. But it was his work as a teacher and an education reformer—work he realized in large part through his best-selling “Blue-Backed Speller”—that also earned him his reputation as “father of American copyright law.” Connecticut played a role, too, in establishing the law that served as the basis for today’s copyright standards.

Learn more: <http://ctexplored.org/noah-webster-father-of-american-copyright-law/>

Tags: #education #socialreform #law

Literacy Tests and the Right to Vote

In 1855, Connecticut became the first state to require a literacy test to vote, with the goal of preventing Irish immigrants from voting. The test was later used to keep Puerto Rican laborers and other groups of people from voting, until civil rights activists made the literacy tests illegal.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/literacy-tests-and-the-right-to-vote/>
Tags: #education #voting #law #socialreform

Civil War and Reconstruction (1860-1877)

Dorence Atwater

Born and raised in Terryville, Dorence Atwater joined the Union army at age 16. Atwater was captured during the war and spent time at the notorious prison camp, Andersonville. He kept a list of the dead and defied the Department of War regarding publication of the list of Union Soldiers buried at Andersonville.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/death-and-mourning-in-the-civil-war-era>
https://www.nps.gov/ande/learn/historyculture/dorence_atwater.htm
Tags: #civilwar #law #military

America's First Ordained Woman Minister: Olympia Brown and Bridgeport's Universalist Church

Olympia Brown served as the first female minister for the Universalist Church in Bridgeport. She was active in women's suffrage and abolition, and her sermons were highly acclaimed. Her opponents, however, eventually forced her out of the church in Bridgeport.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/americas-first-ordained-woman-minister-olympia-brown-and-bridgeports-universalist-church/>
Tags: #religion #womenshistory #suffrage #abolition

Communication on the Railroad: Safe Passage for All

Railroads rode the cutting edge of transportation technology in the 19th century and, as with any new development, certain limitations soon became apparent. Although railroads themselves became a crucial form of communication as well as commerce, they depended a great deal on communications themselves. This was particularly true when it came to the safe operation of trains over extended distances. While railroads used the telegraph to communicate between stations, there was no way to contact individual trains. Railroads depended on written instructions called "train orders" to ensure safe operations.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/horror-on-the-housatonic-the-railroad-disaster-of-august-1865/>
Tags: #commerce #travel #military

Rise of Industrial America (1878-1900)

Avon's Educational and Cultural Pioneer

Yung Wing was the first Chinese-born student to graduate from an American college. After earning his degree from Yale, he set up a program that sent Chinese students to American colleges to receive their education and advocated for education reform.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/avons-educational-and-cultural-pioneer/>
Tags: #education #socialreform

Connecticut and the Comstock Law

In 1879, Connecticut legislators passed a law that banned the use of contraceptives. This followed a national movement restricting the sale and advertisement of birth control, exemplified by the 1873 federal Comstock Law. Men feared that women choosing to delay childbirth to pursue their careers would take jobs away from men and decay the moral fiber of the country. Connecticut's anti-contraceptive laws were by far the strictest in the country and were not repealed until 1965.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticut-and-the-comstock-law/>

Tags: #law #womenshistory #socialreform #health

Communicating Spiritualism to Connecticut

Although the term “spiritualism” conjures images of floating furniture, clairvoyants, and unscrupulous frauds, spiritualism’s historical significance is less about sensational claims or charlatans than about the many of its practitioners who were inspired to become advocates of social reform. At its best, spiritualism was part of a large movement in which people grappled with new interpretations of faith, health, and community, and slowly – and sometimes reluctantly – reevaluated the meanings of democracy and civil rights. Proponents of social justice saw spiritualism’s emphasis on the equal value of individuals as a call to action.

Learn more: <https://www.ctexplored.org/isabella-beecher-hooker-and-the-spirit-of-reform/>

Tags: #religion #socialreform #suffrage #voting #law #abolition #womenshistory #health

A Different “Type” of Connecticut Industry

In the middle of the 1800s, the invention of the typewriter revolutionized the way Americans communicated. The new device allowed for the production of correspondence at previously unimaginable speeds. Though this transformation helped foster more detailed and voluminous exchanges of information, early typewriters were cumbersome and bulky pieces of machinery. In 1892, a patent by a Stamford man not only brought portability to typewriter design, it also helped foster the growth of typewriter manufacturing in Connecticut well into the 20th century.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/a-different-type-of-connecticut-industry/>

Tags: #innovation #technology #labor #journalism #socialreform

First Commercial Telephone Exchange

On January 28, 1878, the Boardman Building in New Haven became the site of the world’s first commercial telephone exchange, the District Telephone Company of New Haven. The exchange was the brainchild of Civil War veteran and telegraph office manager George Coy in partnership with Herrick Frost and Walter Lewis. Coy created a rudimentary telephone switchboard that allowed a central office to connect multiple persons, thus allowing each subscriber the advantage of having to buy only one phone in order to connect to a potentially infinite number of other subscribers. He built the switchboard with carriage bolts, handles from teapot lids, wire, and other spare parts.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-first-commercial-telephone-exchange-today-in-history/>

Tags: #innovation #technology #labor #socialreform #commerce

Progressive to New Eras (1900-1929)

Marietta Canty

Marietta Canty, a Hartford native who began working in local theater productions in the 1920s and went on to a career in Hollywood, appeared in 50 motion pictures alongside stars Marlene Dietrich, John Wayne, Elizabeth Taylor, Spencer Tracy, Mickey Rooney, Katharine Hepburn, Marlon Brando, and James Dean. As an African American actress, Canty initially struggled to find work as an actor but eventually spent more than ten years in Hollywood.

Learn more: <http://ctexplored.org/site-lines-marietta-canty-2/>

Tags: #art #womenshistory #blackhistory

Hartford's City Mother, Josephine Bennett

Josephine Bennett was a women's suffragist from Hartford. She helped launch Hartford's local American Labor Party branch in 1919 and fought tirelessly for women's rights and for free speech.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/hartfords-city-mother-josephine-bennett/>

Tags: #suffrage #voting #law #socialreform #womenshistory

Ida Tarbell: The Woman Who Took On Standard Oil

Ida Tarbell, who spent her retirement in Easton, was one of the most famous investigative journalists in U.S. history. Her exposé of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company is one of the most famous examples of "muckraking" journalism, and the article (published in 19 installments) was pivotal in a 1911 Supreme Court decision that determined Standard Oil was a monopoly, forcing the corporation to split apart.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/ida-tarbell-the-woman-who-took-on-standard-oil/>

Tags: #womenshistory #socialreform #law #journalism

Katharine Houghton Hepburn, A Woman Before Her Time

"Kit" Hepburn, mother to actress Katharine Hepburn, lived much of her life in Hartford, CT. She dedicated her life to feminist causes, fighting first for female suffrage, then birth control for low income women, and finally the Equal Rights Amendment.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/katharine-houghton-hepburn-a-woman-before-her-time/>

Tags: #suffrage #law #socialreform #voting

Women of the Prison Brigade

Edna Purtell of West Hartford, along with more than 20 other women, arrived in Hartford by train in February 1919 as part of the "prison brigade" -- a group of women who had been arrested outside the White House for protesting in favor of women's suffrage.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/women-of-the-prison-brigade/>

Tags: #socialreform #womenshistory #suffrage #voting #law

Mary Townsend Seymour Breaks Down Race

In early 20th-century Hartford, Mary Townsend Seymour helped found the local NAACP chapter and worked for labor rights. She fought battles and formed daring alliances to promote the cause of local African Americans.

Learn more: <http://ctexplored.org/audacious-alliance-mary-townsend-seymour/>

Tags: #blackhistory #womenshistory #law #voting #suffrage #socialreform #labor

Dr. Alice Hamilton

Hamilton pioneered industrial medicine, changing the way industrial waste and chemicals are handled. Her work formed the foundation for OSHA. She broke the barrier of workplace dangers by refusing to believe she was wrong about the connection between workplace hazards and significant health issues in workers.

Learn more: <http://cwhf.org/inductees/science-health/alice-hamilton#.V8RTR krK70>

Tags: #womenshistory #labor #socialreform

A Compromise for Labor: Augusta Lewis Troup

Before women even had the right to vote, Augusta Lewis Troup was a pioneering labor leader and education activist. She founded the Women's Typographical Union of New York and was the first woman to hold office in the all-male International Typographical Union. When she moved to New Haven, she helped found a newspaper through which she advocated for women and the minority population and became a teacher and a member of the Board of Education.

Learn more: <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/augusta-lewis-troup>

Tags: #womenshistory #education #socialreform #journalism

Daylight Savings Time

In 1923, Connecticut passed a law officially maintaining Standard Time all year round and prohibiting the "willful public display of daylight savings time." Eastern Standard Time was to remain the official time throughout the state. Many businesses simply ignored the rule. Between the end of April and the end of October, the clocks in church steeples and courthouse cupolas and on the sidewalks of Hartford might show Eastern Standard Time, but the moment you stepped through a door into a bank, store, or restaurant, the clocks all displayed Daylight Savings Time.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/playing-with-time-the-introduction-of-daylight-saving-time-in-connecticut/>

Tags: #commerce #law #travel

Art Young, Radical Cartoonist

Art Young was a political cartoonist whose criticism of U.S. involvement in WWI resulted in a trial for espionage – punishable by 20 years in prison.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/art-young-radical-cartoonist/>

Tags: #worldwar1 #art #journalism #socialreform #military

19th Amendment: The Fight Over Suffrage in Connecticut

Leaders in Connecticut's women's suffrage movement such as Isabella Beecher Hooker and Frances Ellen Burr, along with countless women from across the state, urged state lawmakers to give women the right to vote. When several lawmakers blocked their efforts, these women wrote to President Woodrow Wilson and protested which eventually won them right to vote in 1919.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/19th-amendment-the-fight-over-woman-suffrage-in-connecticut/>

Tags: #suffrage #womenshistory #voting #law #socialreform

Hello Girls: A Voice for Women in the Army

During WWI a group of women served in the Army as bilingual switchboard operators nicknamed "Hello Girls". These women, some of whom served on the front lines, wore Army uniforms, received Army pay, and were even awarded Army medals, but were denied status as veterans upon returning home. The Hello Girls fought for 60 years to have their service recognized. By 1979, when they finally received recognition, only 18 were still alive.

Learn more: <https://ctdigitalnewspaperproject.org/2016/06/the-hello-girls/>

Tags: #womenshistory #worldwar1 #socialreform #military

The Newsies Strike Back

Newsies – young boys usually aged 10 and under – delivered newspapers in Hartford to earn extra money for their families. When competition between two New York papers resulted in a reduction to the Newsies' pay, the children unionized and went on strike. They successfully convinced local businesses to stop carrying the New York papers and created problems for the local newspaper distributor.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-newsies-strike-back/>

Tags: #journalism #socialreform #labor #law #commerce

Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Alexander Calder Breaks the Kinetic Art Barrier

One of the most acclaimed and influential sculptors of the 20th century, Alexander Calder is most renowned for his invention of the mobile, an abstract sculpture that moves. In addition to mobiles, Calder made wire sculpture, static sculpture called stabiles, toys, theatrical sets, and paintings in oil and gouache, as well as jewelry and numerous household objects. The artist, who owned a home and studio in Roxbury, Connecticut, for more than 40 years, created over 22,000 works in the course of his life and is considered a pioneer of kinetic art.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/a-world-in-motion-artist-and-sculptor-alexander-calder/>

Tags: #art

How the Wobblies Won Free Speech

Through the 1930s, the definition of "free speech" in the United States was fairly limited. Protesters were thrown in jail for speaking about controversial issues, such as communism, in public places. The Industrial Workers of the World (or Wobblies, as they were called) set out to

change this. They would gather in large numbers and speak freely, forcing police to arrest them and overrun the local prisons. The cost to arrest and hold these free speech advocates forced the court to widen its interpretation of free speech.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/how-the-wobblies-won-free-speech/>

Tags: #socialreform #law

Artist Roger Tory Peterson, a Champion for the Natural World

Artist, author, and conservationist Roger Tory Peterson pioneered the modern age of bird watching with his breakthrough 1934 book, *A Field Guide to the Birds*. He testified before Congress against DDT and related pesticides and advocated for protecting the environment.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/artist-roger-tory-peterson-champions-for-the-natural-world/>

Tags: #art #law #commerce #agriculture #health

The Mohegan Cultural Renewal

Fidelia Hoscott Fielding and Gladys Tantaquidgeon, both Mohegan woman, dedicated their lives to preserving and promoting indigenous cultural practices, as well as advocating for women. Tantaquidgeon's efforts to document Mohegan births, marriages, and deaths ensured that the Mohegan tribe received federal recognition. Her commitment to maintaining Mohegan cultural traditions have allowed tribal members to carry on their traditional practices and customs today. Fielding stood against racism and modernism. She preserved the Mohegan language and culture despite prejudice against Native American culture and pressure to modernize.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/gladys-tantaquidgeon-preserves-the-states-native-past/>

Tags: #indigenouspeoples #education #womenshistory #socialreform

Hilda Crosby Standish, Early Proponent of Women's Reproductive Health

Dr. Hilda Crosby Standish was a Hartford physician who advocated for women's reproductive rights. In the 1930s she ran Connecticut's first birth control clinic, even though promoting contraceptives was illegal in the state during that time. She devoted her life to protecting women's reproductive health and rights.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/hilda-crosby-standish-early-proponent-of-womens-reproductive-health/>

Tags: #womenshistory #health #law #socialreform

A Woman Who Developed Tolerance: Leila T. Alexander

Leila T. Alexander served as the director of the Pearl Street Neighborhood House (now the Hopkins Street Center) for 20 years. The Waterbury branch of the NAACP was founded in this building while it was under her direction, and she was recognized by state leaders for her work in bringing people from different racial and social backgrounds together.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/a-woman-who-developed-tolerance-leila-t-alexander/>

Tags: #womenshistory #blackhistory #socialreform

Hiram Bingham IV: A Humanitarian Honored for Saving Lives during WWII

Hiram Bingham IV, whose father has been credited with discovering Machu Picchu, served as vice consul at the U.S. Consulate in Marseilles, France in 1940-41. Jewish individuals and families from across Europe fled to France to escape the Nazis, but France fell to Germany in 1940. Bingham secretly smuggled thousands of refugees out of Europe during this time, going against official U.S. policy.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/hiram-bingham-iv-a-humanitarian-honored-for-saving-lives-during-wwii/>

Tags: #worldwar2 #military #socialreform #law

The Hurricane of 1938 Breaks Down Communication

The great hurricane of 1938, which hit on September 21, was the first major hurricane to strike New England since 1869. Inaccurate weather forecasts left Greenwich residents unprepared. Eighty-mile-an-hour winds lashed the coast and the torrential downpour caused rivers and streams to overflow. At 8:15 pm electric power went out and with it the fire alarm system, police radio, and the teletype system. The downed communications seriously handicapped the police and firefighters; two on-duty desk sergeants were swamped with telephone calls from all parts of town. This breakdown in communication along with the intense storm led to the Hurricane of 1938 becoming the worst natural disaster to befall the town but also as the most devastating hurricane in New England history.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-great-hurricane-of-1938-today-in-history/>

Tags: #nature #socialreform

Bob Steele Broadcasts the News Across Connecticut

For more than sixty years, Bob Steele was the radio voice of Southern New England, entertaining listeners of WTIC AM with his wit, humor, and an inimitable style that kept listeners faithfully tuning in to his morning show. Capturing the nation's highest market share, the National Radio Hall of Fame inductee maintained an unparalleled popularity through the latter half of the twentieth century.

Learn more: <https://gratingthenutmeg.libsyn.com/90-bob-steele-the-voice-of-connecticut-radio>

Tags: #technology #journalism #worldwar2

The Hartford Chronicle Communicates Black History

The Hartford Chronicle family of newspapers began in 1940 with the Hartford-Springfield Chronicle, a weekly published in nearby Springfield, Massachusetts, by the Square Deal Publishing Company. Square Deal was the publishing house of the historically important Boston Chronicle, an African American newspaper founded by West Indian immigrants. The Hartford-Springfield Chronicle was succeeded, first, by the Hartford Chronicle, and then, by the Connecticut Chronicle, both of which covered Hartford, other Connecticut towns, and nearby cities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The two titles were distinguished not only by their civil rights crusades but by the degree to which they showcased nationally recognized African American columnists and political cartoonists.

Learn more: <https://ctdigitalnewspaperproject.org/2018/07/introducing-the-hartford-chronicle-family-of-newspapers/>

Tags: #blackhistory #innovation #labor #journalism #suffrage #socialreform

Post War United States (1945-1968)

The Northern Student Movement

The Northern Student Movement was a civil rights group founded by Yale students in the early 1960s. The group soon grew and spread across the northeast. The organization advocated for African American equality and worked to tutor thousands of grade school students throughout the region.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/the-northern-student-movement/>

Tags: #blackhistory #socialreform #education

Taking on the State: Griswold v. Connecticut

The Barnum Act of 1879 banned the use of birth control in Connecticut. Estelle Griswold, a women's rights advocate and Executive Director of the Planned Parenthood League of Connecticut, helped women leave the state to get information on contraceptives, defied Connecticut law by providing women with birth control, and successfully argued in U.S. Supreme Court that the Barnum Act was unconstitutional.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/taking-on-the-state-griswold-v-connecticut/>

Tags: #law #womenshistory #health #socialreform

The Language of the Unheard: Racial Unrest in 20th-Century Hartford

Throughout the early- and mid-1900s, racial tensions simmered in Connecticut as African Americans found themselves living in substandard housing, facing high rates of child mortality, and struggling to find work from prejudiced employers. White leaders did little to address these complaints. By the 1960s, these tensions boiled over across the U.S. leading to riots in the streets of Connecticut cities.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/the-language-of-the-unheard-racial-unrest-in-20th-century-hartford/>

Tags: #blackhistory #health #labor #education

Photographing Conflict: Margaret Bourke-White

Photographer, journalist, writer, and social activist, Margaret Bourke-White was a woman of many firsts: first female photographer for Life magazine, first female war correspondent, first Western photographer allowed into the Soviet Union. The tough-minded and talented Bourke-White was driven by more than mere ambition. She had a deep-rooted belief in an artist's duty to change the world. Known for her Life colleagues as "Maggie the Indestructible," Bourke-White documented some of the most pivotal moments of the 20th century.

Learn more: <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2019/08/photography-of-margaret-bourke-white/596980/>

Tags: #womenshistory #art #military #journalism

Just Like Georgia Except for the Climate: Ann Petry

Best-selling writer Ann Petry explored many facets of the black experience in her fiction. Born in Saybrook (now Old Saybrook), Connecticut just after the turn of the 20th century, she brought to her work the sensibility of someone who grew up as part of a tiny minority and who saw the horrors of ghetto living during the nine years she spent in New York City. Her novel *The Narrows* offers a commentary on the racial, class, and economic conflicts that lie beneath the surface in mid-century New England.

Learn more: <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/ann-petry>

Tags: #womenshistory #blackhistory #education #socialreform

Connecticut Lawyer Prosecutes Nazi War Criminals at Nuremberg

Thomas Joseph Dodd was the 2nd highest-ranking U.S. attorney in the Nuremberg Trials that held Nazi war criminals responsible for the atrocities of WWII. Dodd was key in accumulating evidence of Nazi war crimes.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticut-lawyer-prosecutes-nazi-war-criminals-at-nuremberg/>

Tags: #military #worldwar2 #law #socialreform

Simon Bernstein and the 1965 Connecticut Education Amendment

Until 1965, Connecticut did not guarantee its citizens a constitutional right to an education. Legislator Simon Bernstein was given only five minutes to write an amendment that would guarantee an education for Connecticut's students. The amendment he wrote passed through the legislature and became a law, leading to significant changes in Connecticut's education system.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/five-minutes-that-changed-connecticut-simon-bernstein-and-the-1965-connecticut-education-amendment/>

Tags: #socialreform #education #law

Constance Baker Motley: A Warrior for Justice

Motley was born in Connecticut and became the first black woman to attend the Columbia University School of Law. Throughout her career she worked with civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, and James Meredith. She wrote the first legal brief in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and represented the "freedom riders" and others from across the South who fought for equality for African Americans.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/people/constance-baker-motley/>

Tags: #blackhistory #education #law #socialreform #suffrage

Helen Keller: Commutating the Importance of Disability Rights

Helen Keller, who moved to Easton at the age of 56, stood for disability rights. She became the first deaf-blind person to receive a bachelor's degree. She also became an author and advocate for people with disabilities. The Americans With Disabilities Act was a direct result of her lifetime of advocacy.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/helen-keller-in-connecticut-the-last-years-of-a-legendary-crusader/>

Tags: #socialreform #education #law #womenshistory

Caroline Ferriday Communicates the Needs of Ravensbrück Survivors

In 1958, 13 years after the end of World War II, Ferriday was among the first to awaken the American public to the horrors of Ravensbrück. Because Poland was behind the Iron Curtain, the camp was liberated by the Russian Army, not the American. And since it was a camp for women and not specifically devoted to the extermination of the Jews, the history of this camp was slow to emerge. Ferriday traveled to Warsaw in 1958 and acted as an emissary and liaison to meet with Polish officials and to gain the trust of the Lapins. She and Cousins, who had indeed agreed to help, contacted the Lapins, now in Poland, and arranged their trip to the United States for care.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/a-godmother-to-ravensbruck-survivors/>

Tags: #worldwar2 #womenshistory #military #labor #law #socialreform #health

Contemporary United States (1969-present)

Sol Lewitt Draws a Barrier Meant to be Broken

An innovator, Sol Lewitt is probably best known for his wall drawings—a radical concept in the art world at the time as they were temporary, site-specific works meant to be painted over and destroyed. To emphasize that the idea, rather than its execution, represented the artist's true creation, Lewitt often turned the implementation of the wall drawings over to assistants who followed his written instructions but had some freedom in their interpretation and execution. By the time of LeWitt's death in 2007, he was internationally regarded for his visionary work. LeWitt's wall drawings currently occupy prominent, permanent spaces in the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford and the New Britain Museum of American Art.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/painter-muralist-sculptor-sol-lewitt-born-today-in-history/>

Tags: #art #socialreform

Weaver High School Students and the 1st Amendment

Marcus Manselle, an African American student at Weaver High School, was suspended in 1969 for publishing and distributing a student newspaper that criticized the education system and advocated student rights. When administrators, city government, and a state judge refused to overturn Manselle's suspension, his fellow students went on strike. Their protests led to a resolution that allowed students to continue distributing non-sanctioned student newspapers.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/a-first-amendment-lesson-weaver-high-students-teach-their-elders/>

Tags: #education #blackhistory #journalism #socialreform

Maria Sánchez, State Representative and Community Advocate

Maria Sánchez successfully advocated for bilingual education in Hartford schools and served on the Hartford Board of Education. She founded the Puerto Rican Parade Committee in 1964 (a parade that the Latino community still celebrates each year in Hartford), and in 1988 she became the first Latina elected to the Connecticut General Assembly.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/maria-sanchez-state-representative-and-community-advocate/>

Tags: #law #socialreform #education #latinxhistory #latinahistory #latinohistory

Sheff v. O'Neill Settlements Target Educational Segregation in Hartford

In 1989, Milo Sheff -- a fourth grade student from Hartford -- and his parents, along with 17 other students and their parents, filed a lawsuit against the State of Connecticut, arguing that Hartford students did not have equal access to quality public education. This group of students and parents won their lawsuit, resulting in the establishment of the Open Choice program that created more magnet schools and encouraged suburban students to attend Hartford schools, and vice versa.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/sheff-v-oneill-settlements-target-educational-segregation-in-hartford/>

Tags: #education #blackhistory #socialreform #latinoahistory #latinahistory #latinxhistory #law

Morton Biskind Warned the World About DDT

Physician Morton Biskind was one of the first medical professionals to discover the negative impact of the pesticide DDT in human patients. Along with a colleague, he published an article warning the public about the dangers of DDT. While his work was originally ignored, researchers eventually determined that Biskind was right, and the U.S. banned DDT in 1972.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/morton-biskind-warned-the-world-about-ddt/>

Tags: #health #socialreform #preservation #law #agriculture #commerce

The Black Panther Party in Connecticut: Community Survival Programs

While the Black Panther Party existed in Connecticut for only a short time (1969-1972), their activism did a tremendous amount of good for the people of Connecticut. The party provided free breakfast to school children, successfully advocated for victims of the Park River flooding in Hartford, and protested against racism and police brutality. But the federal and state governments saw the group as a threat to national security and illegally spied on thousands of Black Panthers and their supporters.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/the-black-panther-party-in-connecticut-community-survival-programs/>

Tags: #blackhistory #education #law #socialreform

Fighting Conflict Through Photography: Jane Hamilton-Merritt

Jane Hamilton-Merritt was a Vietnam-era photojournalist who not only documented the conflict of the era but also devoted her life to pursuing justice for the Hmong people of Laos who she encountered during that time.

Learn more: <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/jane-hamilton-merritt>

Tags: #military #womenshistory #art #journalism

Advancing the Labor Movement

Betty Tianti dedicated her life to the advancement of the labor movement. In doing so, she made history in 1985 when she was elected president of the AFL-CIO in Connecticut, becoming the

nation's first woman to head a labor federation. Tianti further made history three years later when she was appointed to be the state's first female Commissioner of Labor – a position that had been filled by men since its inception in 1873.

Learn more: <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/betty-tianti>

Tags: #labor #law #womenshistory #commerce #socialreform

The Anti-Income Tax Rally of 1991

With the signing of the state budget passed by the Connecticut General Assembly in the early morning hours of August 22, 1991, Governor Lowell Weicker overturned two of the state's steady habits – political opposition to a state income tax and reliance on the sales tax as the main source of state revenue. His signing of the budget also set in motion events leading to what is regarded as the largest public demonstration in the state's history – the October 5, 1991 Anti-Income Tax Rally on the grounds of the State Capitol. Official estimates placed attendance at 40,000, while rally organizers claimed 70,000 citizens attended.

Learn more: <https://www.ctexplored.org/sample-article-the-anti-income-tax-rally-of-1991/>

Tags: #law #socialreform #commerce

The Ku Klux Klan in Connecticut

While the KKK's stronghold was always in the South, Connecticut was once home to as many as 18,000 Klan members in the 1920s. The group quickly dwindled, but splinter Klan groups continued to protest in Connecticut. These protests were revived in Meriden in the 1980s when dozens of Klan members and their supporters protested in defense of a police officer who shot and killed an African American man accused of shoplifting.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-ku-klux-klan-in-connecticut/>

Tags: #blackhistory #socialreform #law

Karen Carpenter

Born in New Haven, Karen Carpenter and her brother, Richard, formed the Carpenters. They became the biggest selling group of the 1970s with hits including "We've Only Just Begun". However, Karen struggled with anorexia and died at the age of 32 from complications of that disease.

Learn more: <https://todayinthehistory.com/2019/07/25/july-25-the-new-haven-born-carpenters-top-the-charts/>

Tags: #art #womenshistory #health