Contents

Using this Guide ........................................................................................................................................... 1

First Encounters and the Colonial Era (pre-1775) ....................................................................................... 2

Revolutionary War and a New Nation (1775-1815) ....................................................................................... 6

The Era of Reform (1815-1859) ..................................................................................................................... 10

Civil War and Reconstruction (1860-1877) ................................................................................................ 15

Rise of Industrial America (1878-1900) ...................................................................................................... 17

Progressive to New Eras (1900-1929) ....................................................................................................... 19

Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945) ...................................................................................... 21

Post War United States (1945-1968) .......................................................................................................... 22

Contemporary United States (1969-present) .............................................................................................. 26

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
#agriculture
#art
#blackhistory
#civilwar
#commerce
#discovery
#education
#entertainment
#health
#indigenouspeoples
#innovation
#journalism
#labor
#latinahistory
#latinohistory
#latinxhistory
#law
#government
#medicine
#military
#nature
#nauticalhistory
#preservation
#religion
#revolutionarywar
#slavery
#socialreform
#suffrage
#technology
#travel
#voting
#womenshistory
#worldwar1
#worldwar2
First Encounters and the Colonial Era (pre-1775)

The concept of Wilderness and Undeveloped Lands

What the European colonists considered "wilderness" and "undeveloped" differed from how the Indigenous natives viewed land, property, and land use. One place this difference is reflected is in court cases regarding land disputes, as well as treaties, trade agreements, and land purchases between the English colonists and Indigenous tribes/nations.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/breaking-the-myth-of-the-unmanaged-landscape

Tags: #indigenouspeoples #law

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 and 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: #indigenouspeoples #education #religion

The Pequot War

Small CT towns were considered part of the western frontier for English settlers in the early 1600s. The conflicts between English settlers and indigenous residents over this land ultimately leading to the Pequot War. At the time, the Pequot resided in what is now southeastern Connecticut. The conflict drew in numerous Native American tribes who fought on both sides of the war. The war culminated with the 1638 Treaty of Hartford, which outlawed the Pequot language and name, seized tribal lands, and disbanded the surviving Pequot, who were given to the victors as spoils of war or sold into slavery. Today, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation in southeastern Connecticut is proof of a people’s endurance and a collaborative project funded by the National Park Service is under way to identify and preserve sites associated with the Pequot War.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/topics-page/pequot-war/
Other places to research: Battles of the Pequot War Project (pequotwar.org), Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center
Tags: #indigenouspeoples #law #military
Dutch vs. English
Both the Dutch and English began to explore and settle in the region that became Connecticut in the 17th-century bringing the two nations into conflict about this area. Dutch navigator, Adriaen Block, was the first European to explore the Connecticut River in 1614. The Dutch established a trading post, Huys de Hope, in 1633 on the site of present-day Hartford. Three years later, Rev. Thomas Hooker and his followers arrived and established a settlement close to the Dutch post. English settlers continued to arrive and establish towns while the Dutch focused on utilizing resources for profit. The Treaty of Hartford finally resolved the dispute between the two European nations in 1650.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/reckoning-with-the-dutch-the-treaty-of-hartford-1650
Tags: #discovery

Who was First: Wethersfield or Windsor?
For years, a debate has raged over which town—Windsor or Wethersfield—is the oldest in Connecticut. Much of the debate centers on what constitutes a town. A trading post established in 1633 at the juncture of the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers eventually became Windsor. Captain John Oldham established a settlement in 1634 south of the Dutch trading post that became Wethersfield. Eventually the two towns, along with Hartford, formed the Colony of Connecticut.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticuts-oldest-english-settlement
Tags: #discovery

Were the Fundamental Orders the World's First Democratic Constitution?
One of Connecticut's state nicknames is the "Constitution State" after the claim that Connecticut's Fundamental Orders of 1639 was the world's first democratic constitution. In 1638, Rev. Thomas Hooker delivered a sermon in which he said, "The foundation of authority is laid firstly in the free consent of people." The sermon inspired the creation of the Fundamental Orders in 1639, a document that united Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor under a framework of self-governance. John Fiske, a Hartford born historian of the 19th century, was the first to argue that the Fundamental Orders were the first democratic Constitution; an idea that has been contested by other historians.

Tags: #government
The Life of Venture Smith
Venture Smith was kidnapped from a royal family in Africa and enslaved 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 Connecticans 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 Southwick Jog: A Frontier between Connecticut and Massachusetts
From the time of Connecticut’s charter in 1662 to the present, the state’s boundaries have posed many challenges for those who survey them. The original charter from King Charles II described Connecticut’s boundaries as including all lands west of Narragansett Bay, “south by the sea,” north by Massachusetts Plantation, and west by the Pacific Ocean and adjoining islands. For various reasons, the present map of Connecticut bears no resemblance to that description. Southwick was a section of the older Massachusetts town of Westfield, though its limits fell south of the true colony line. Westfield had been settled long before Connecticut’s charter, and boundaries in this lightly settled western region of Massachusetts remained poorly defined. In 1801 Connecticut and Massachusetts came to an agreement: The portion of Southwick east of the Congamond Lakes went to Connecticut and became part of Suffield, and the western portion, still known as Southwick, went to Massachusetts.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/surveying-connecticuts-borders/
Tags: #nature #preservation

Connecticut’s Black Governors
For approximately one hundred years, from the middle of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century, there was a black governor in Connecticut. Selection of a leader was an African tradition brought by black slaves to the British colonies and the practice became formally established in Connecticut in the 1750s. Despite its democratic origins, powerful whites usurped the position and used governors largely to help “maintain order” within the black population.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticuts-black-governors/
Tags: #blackhistory #law #revolutionarywar #slavery #suffrage #voting

The Great Awakening
In the Great Awakening, a religious revival of the 1740s, impassioned evangelical ministers like George Whitfield attracted crowds of thousands. Convinced the colony had strayed dangerously from its early religious principles, they cried out for a return to the strict Puritanism of the 17th century. Whitfield’s popularity threatened traditional church leaders, and the General Assembly promptly banned traveling preachers and even deported one.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/an-orderly-decent-government-searching-for-the-common-good-1634-1776/
Tags: #education #law #religion #travel
Common Land in Connecticut

The town green remains a quintessential and unique part of the New England landscape, and for those towns lucky enough to have one still, the green may be one of the only extant artifacts from colonial times. As English settlers laid out Connecticut’s earliest towns in the 17th century, they reserved the best land for planting and for animals to graze, then plotted land close by on which to build their homes, often on equal-sized plots. In the middle of their settlement, they reserved a common area for public use and as a place to erect a meetinghouse. While some planned settlements were regular in arrangement, more often they were irregular tracts shaped by topography and burgeoning town development.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/the-connecticut-town-green/
Tags: #agriculture #commerce #education #innovation #labor #nature #preservation #socialreform

Mohegan Indians v. Connecticut (1704-1775)

The lawsuits between the Mohegan tribe and Connecticut are significant, because the litigation was the first British case to rule on indigenous land ownership and it revealed the strains in the relationship between the Crown, the colony, and the tribe. The dispute began in the 1600s when the Mohegan, after breaking with the Pequot due to alliances during the 1637 Pequot War, ceded all their lands, except for a reserve of farms and hunting grounds, to the New England colonies. The dispute centered on a tract of land that comes to about 20,000 acres in southeastern Connecticut. The Mohegans claimed the colony had reserved this land for their use. The heirs of John Mason claimed the Mohegan tribe gave the reserved lands to their ancestor, Capt. John Mason, the future deputy governor of Connecticut. Subsequently, the Masons then transferred the land to the colonial government, attesting that the Mohegans had received enough farmland to sustain them. Both the Mohegan and Mason heirs argued that this land transfer was invalid and thus began almost a century of dispute. In 1687, the Connecticut colony began granting the disputed land to settlers. The Mason family, on behalf of the Mohegan, argued that this violated existing treaties. The Dudley Commission found in favor of the Mohegan Tribe but subsequent commissions of review sided with Connecticut. In 1773, on the eve of the American Revolution, the Privy Council gave its final ruling in the case of the Mohegan Indians versus the colony of Connecticut. it concluded that although the Mohegan were "not then Subject" to local municipal law, their lands had been included within the colony and their rights to the lands-if they had not already been ceded by treaty-had been extinguished according to British (imperial) law by royal charter. The Mohegans first petitioned for federal acknowledgment in 1978. In 1979, the Mohegan tribe successfully sued for lands in Montville, Connecticut and in 1994 received federal recognition as a tribe.

Learn more: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohegan_Indians_v._Connecticut
Tags: #law
Revolutionary War and a New Nation (1775-1815)

Connecticut and the Western Reserve
Did you know that the state of Connecticut once owned part of Ohio? Under 1662 Charter, Connecticut was to stretch from the “Narraganset-Bay on the East, to the South Sea on the West Part.” Imagine taking Connecticut’s northern and southern borders and extending them west to the Pacific Ocean, described in the charter as the “South Sea.” If these western land claims were still held today, the cities of Albany, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Des Moines, Omaha, and Salt Lake City would be part of Connecticut. The royal charter provided a justification for claiming western lands. Following the model of other states, Connecticut gave most of its claimed land over to the federal government in 1786, but it “reserved” a territory in the northeast of present-day Ohio for its continued use and settlement. This became the Connecticut Western Reserve.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/new-connecticut-on-lake-erie-connecticuts-western-reserve/

Tags: #discovery #travel

**The Litchfield Historical Society is planning an exhibition on the Western Reserve for 2023, and has gathered a large amount of material and resources.**

Pennamite Wars between Connecticut and Pennsylvania over the Wyoming Valley
When Connecticut’s population exploded in the 17th century leaving little land available for further settlements, the colony began to claim the Wyoming Valley. This area had been included in charters granted by King Charles II to both Connecticut and Pennsylvania. In 1753, a group from Connecticut formed the Susquehanna Company to settle these lands and when settlers arrived in the 1760s, they found Pennsylvanian settlers already in residence. Violence ensued in a series of three wars fought until a settlement was reached.

Learn more: https://www.colonialwarsct.org/1769.htm, https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/hg/maps/susquehanna

Tags: #discovery #government #military

New Connecticut on Lake Erie: Connecticut’s Western Reserve
When Europeans began settling the Atlantic seaboard of what became the United States, no one knew how far the land extended. As a result, many colonies, including Connecticut, were given vague charters of conveyance that implied they had rights to land far to their west. This led to numerous boundary disputes between the states. The new federal government stepped in to settle these disputes, and on September 13, 1786, Connecticut relinquished its claims except for a 120-mile-long strip along Lake Erie, called the Western Reserve.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/new-connecticut-on-lake-erie-connecticuts-western-reserve/

Tags: #agriculture #commerce #nature #preservation #travel
Margaret Van Horn Dwight’s Journey to Warren, Ohio

In 1810, Margaret Van Horn Dwight traveled from New Haven, CT to what was then considered a frontier town by Americans, Warren, OH. Warren was founded in 1798 on land purchased from the Connecticut Land Company on Connecticut’s Western Reserve. Born in 1790, Margaret was the daughter of Dr. Maurice Dwight. After her father’s death in 1796 and her mother’s remarriage, Margaret was raised by her grandmother, Mary Edwards Dwight. Margaret moved in with an aunt in New Haven following her grandmother’s death in 1807. Margaret left New Haven in 1810 to travel to Warren, where she had cousins living.

Learn more: Margaret’s Journal is available online at hathitrust.org.
https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433113800332&view=1up&seq=10
Tags: #travel #discovery

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

The Connecticut Compromise

On July 16, 1787, a plan proposed by Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth, Connecticut’s delegates to the Constitutional Convention, established a two-house legislature. The Great Compromise, or Connecticut Compromise as it is often called, proposed a solution to the heated debate between larger and smaller states over their representation in the newly proposed Senate.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/the-connecticut-compromise/
Tags: #revolutionarywar #law #voting

Connecticut’s Role in the Frontier of Democracy

Many historians view the United States as the first country to become a democracy. Connecticut’s Oliver Ellsworth, Roger Sherman, William Samuel Johnson (Connecticut’s signers of the Constitution), and others actively participated in forming those documents.

Learn more: https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/founding-fathers-connecticut
Tags: #revolutionarywar #law #voting
Connecticut’s Loyal Subjects: Toryism and the American Revolution
At the outbreak of the war, Connecticut consisted of six counties and 72 townships. According to the census of 1774, throughout these counties and townships, there existed some 25,000 males between the ages of 16 and 50, of whom about 2,000 identified themselves as Tories. Nowhere was the presence of these individuals stronger than in the southwestern portion of the state, particularly in Fairfield County. The presence of Loyalists was such that, by the winter of 1775, the General Assembly passed an “act for restraining and punishing persons who are inimical to the Liberties of this and the rest of the United Colonies.”

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticuts-loyal-subjects-toryism-and-the-american-revolution/
Tags: #revolutionarywar #law #military

John Ledyard: On the Frontiers of Exploration
John Ledyard was born in Groton, CT in 1751 and lived in Hartford as a young person. He was the nephew of Revolutionary War Colonel William Ledyard, after whom the town of Ledyard is named. Just prior to the American Revolution, John enlisted in the British navy, and in that capacity accompanied Cook on his final voyage to Hawaii. He returned to Hartford in 1783 and met Thomas Jefferson in 1785. Together they planned for Ledyard’s exploration of Russia and Siberia, with the goal of crossing the Bering Strait, exploring the Pacific Coast and American West, and ending in Virginia. Ledyard got as far as the mid-Siberian city of Yakutsk before being arrested and deported to London. He was then hired to explore the interior of Africa but died in Cairo of an accidental dose of sulfuric acid in 1789 at 37 years of age.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/john-ledyard-connecticuts-most-famous-traveler
https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffwest.html

Further resources:
https://archive.org/details/lifejohnledyard02spargoog/page/n10/mode/2up
https://archive.org/details/americantraveler0000zugj
https://archive.org/details/makingofjohnledy0000gray
https://archive.org/details/cihm_18281/page/n9/mode/2up?view=theater
Tags: #discovery #travel

Noah Webster and the First American Dictionary
Born in what is now West Hartford, Noah Webster attended Yale, studied law in Litchfield, and became a schoolteacher. He published what became known as the Blue-Backed Speller in 1783. Webster believed in the need for a unified language for the new nation and in 1828 published the American Dictionary of the English Language. Webster served in the Connecticut legislature and was involved in several issues, including anti-slavery; educational reforms; and establishing the first copyright laws.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/noah-webster-and-the-dream-of-a-common-language
Tags: #education #socialreform
The Rise and Fall of Silas Deane, American Patriot

Silas Deane was an American patriot and prominent member of the Continental Congress at the dawn of the American Revolution. On a diplomatic mission to France, Deane played a key role in obtaining the military supplies that made possible the victory at Saratoga in October 1777, leading to an alliance with the French the following year. His early achievements lost their luster, however, after Deane was recalled to face a protracted, rancorous battle with Congress over his financial dealings. He returned to Europe bitter and disillusioned, publicly questioning the wisdom of colonial independence and the break with Great Britain.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/the-rise-and-fall-of-silas-deane-american-patriot/
Tags: #revolutionarywar #military
The Era of Reform (1815-1859)

The Connecticut Constitution of 1818
The 1817 gubernatorial election resulted in the election of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., transferring power from the Federalists/Standing Order to the Toleration Party. The new ruling party pushed for a new state constitution which led to the adoption of the Constitution of 1818. The Constitution was a new frontier for the state, changing the existing state government as well as the rights of many Connecticans. Some of the new ideas and changes included: the role of the governor, specifying that voters must be "white" men (among other qualifications), disestablishing the Congregational Church.

Tags: #government

A Pioneer in the Treatment of the Mentally Ill: Eli Todd
Born in New Haven, Eli Todd believed in the humane treatment of the mentally ill. He was the director of the Connecticut Retreat for the Insane, which began admitting patients in 1824. The Retreat later became known as the Institute of Living and is still in existence today. Todd was also concerned about alcohol consumption as a societal problem and was a member of the temperance organization, the Washington Society of Farmington.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/medical-pioneer-eli-todd-born
Tags: #medicine

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

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
**Hartford’s Talcott Street Church & School for Black Children**
Talcott Street Congregational Church was built on the corner of Talcott and Market Streets in 1826. It was the first Black church in Hartford and the first school for Black children, both established in response to racist segregation and hostility by the white community. For much of the 19th century, it was the center of community for Black and some Native American Hartford residents, an educational hub and a safe haven for fugitives of enslavement finding their way north on the Underground Railroad. Pastored at different periods by prominent abolitionists, James W. C. Pennington and Hosea Easton, the church was attended by people whose remarkable stories are available today in books and articles but are largely unknown. The people of Talcott Church and School include Deacon James Mars, who published a memoir of growing up enslaved in Connecticut; educator Rebecca Primus, who moved to Maryland after abolition to start a school for newly freed Black residents; writer and educator Ann Plato, whose book of essays, poems, and sketches made her the second published African American poet and the first published African American essayist in the United States, and whom scholars believe was also of Native ancestry; artist, educator, and businessman Augustus Washington, whose daguerreotype studio on Main Street attracted patrons such as Lydia Sigourney and John Brown. Under Rev. Pennington’s leadership, the church actively participated in the Amistad Trial as it took place at the nearby State House.


Further resources: exhibit at Capital Community College (opening September 2022) & church site; Faith Congregational Church; LibGuide link to articles [https://capital.libguides.com/c.php?g=1148870&p=8385335](https://capital.libguides.com/c.php?g=1148870&p=8385335); Rebecca Primus’s digitized letters at CT Historical Society; books by Pennington, Plato, and Mars available online. Barbara Beeching’s *Hopes and Expectations*, biography of James Pennington *American to the Backbone* by Christopher Webber
Tags: #blackhistory #abolition #religion #socialreform #slavery

**The Heathen School of Cornwall**
The Heathen School was a school in Cornwall, CT, designed to educate people considered, at that time, to be heathen: 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.

Tags: #indigenouspeoples #socialreform #education
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

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

The Most Famous American in the World
The massive crowd in Liverpool, England, had been lined up at the dock for hours to get a glimpse of the famous American author. Her name was Harriet Beecher Stowe, and she was internationally famous for her antislavery novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, published in March 1852. A complex work exploring family and home, religion, and justice, Uncle Tom's Cabin exposed the immorality of slavery and cried for its demise. Stowe's book, originally run as a 45-part series in an abolitionist newspaper, was a runaway success, selling 10,000 copies in a week and more than 300,000 copies in the United States in its first year, despite being widely banned in the South. It changed public opinion, created characters still talked about, influenced ideas about equity, and fomented revolution from Russia to Cuba.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/the-most-famous-american-in-the-world/
Tags: #abolition #art #blackhistory #civilwar #labor #law #slavery #socialreform #travel #womenshistory

John Brown: A Portrait of Violent Abolitionism
John Brown was a staunch abolitionist famous for his beliefs in the equality of African Americans and for his use of violence in opposing the spread of slavery in the decade before the Civil War. Considered by pro-slavery Southerners as “a damned black-hearted villain,” abolitionists met Brown’s radical exploits with a combination of admiration and revulsion.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/john-brown-a-portrait-of-violent-abolitionism/
Tags: #abolition #blackhistory #civilwar #law #slavery #socialreform
**Thomas Gallaudet and Deaf Education**

Thomas Gallaudet championed and pioneered deaf education and started the American School for the Deaf in Connecticut. He became interested in education for the deaf after meeting Alice Cogswell and subsequently traveling to France and studying with Laurent Clerc. In 1816, Gallaudet and Clerc opened the American Asylum for Deaf-Mutes, which later became the American School for the Deaf. Gallaudet’s son, Edward, founded Gallaudet University in Washington DC.

Learn more: [https://connecticuthistory.org/gallaudets-vision-advances-deaf-education](https://connecticuthistory.org/gallaudets-vision-advances-deaf-education)
Tags: #education

**Center Church: At the Center of Connecticut throughout the Centuries**

Thomas Hooker established the church and the City of Hartford in 1636, making it the oldest church in Hartford. Now on its fourth building, the church has witnessed and participated in nearly every major event in American history since the colonization of CT. In the 19th century, Center Church was at the heart of conversations about slavery and abolition. Thomas Gallaudet, a Congregational minister and member of Center Church, was secretary of the CT Colonization Society, American Colonization Society (ACS). The ACS was instrumental in founding the Colony of Liberia, which is now Liberia, West Africa. The Colonization Movement was committed to the relocation of free and emancipated persons of African descent out of the country. Gallaudet’s invitation of Prince Abdul Rahman ibn Ibrahima Sori in 1828 was a milestone event in the church’s history of Black liberation. Abdul Rahman was a Muslim prince from Guinea captured and sold into slavery in 1787. His bondage lasted 40 years, and his return to Africa after emancipation included a stop and lecture at Center Church. However, colonization was not the same as abolition, and Center Church’s pastor during most of the 19th century - Joel Hawes - was an abolitionist. He supported key figures like James Pennington and Frederick Douglass during his pastorate, while leading a church that was divided on the best way(s) to end slavery.

Learn more: [https://connecticuthistory.org/liberian-independence-day](https://connecticuthistory.org/liberian-independence-day)
Tags: #blackhistory #slavery #abolition

**Prudence Crandall, Sarah Harris, and the Canterbury Female Boarding School**

Crandall and Harris were on the frontier of equal access to education for Black and Brown young women through the establishment of the Canterbury Female Boarding School as a school for non-white young women. Crandall’s court trials, "Crandall v. Connecticut” impacted two U.S. Supreme Court cases and laid the foundation for the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Many students, such as Mary Harris, Julia Williams, and Mary Miles went on to become national and international reformers, educators, and leaders in their communities.

Learn more: [https://connecticuthistory.org/prudence-crandall-fights-for-equal-access-to-education](https://connecticuthistory.org/prudence-crandall-fights-for-equal-access-to-education)
Further Resources: The Linda Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives, at Connecticut College
Tags: #education
**Connecticut-Kansas Colony**

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 gave Kansas residents the opportunity to choose whether it would become a free state or one that allowed slavery. As a result, Kansas became a battleground during the antebellum period. The Connecticut-Kansas Company was formed to raise money to send sixty-one adults (the majority men) and two children, led by Charles B. Lines of New Haven, to settle in Kansas. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's Brooklyn, NY congregation donated rifles and Bibles to the settlers. Prairie life was difficult, and some settlers quickly returned home. Others joined "The Prairie Guard" and spent a month and half fighting pro-slavery Missourians who were attacking Free State settlers. In 1861, Kansas entered the Union as a Free State. Many of the New Haven settlers left to fight in the Civil War.

Learn more: [https://mountmitchellprairie.org/history/beecher-bible-and-rifle-church](https://mountmitchellprairie.org/history/beecher-bible-and-rifle-church)

Further resources: [https://archive.org/details/connecticutkansa00osme/page/n13/mode/1up](https://archive.org/details/connecticutkansa00osme/page/n13/mode/1up)

Tags: #slavery #civilwar #abolition
Civil War and Reconstruction (1860-1877)

Connecticut's Role in the Impressionist Movement
Impressionism was a 19th-century art movement characterized by a focus on ordinary subject matter and capturing a moment in time utilizing visible brush strokes. This new style was a departure from the art world’s previous focus on lines and contour in art. Lyme and Cos Cob were two Impressionist art colonies in Connecticut that contributed to the development of a new genre of art.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticut-and-american-impressionism
More info: Lyman Allyn, Weir Farm National Historic Park
Tags: #art

Brownstone as a Frontier in American Architecture
Brownstone was originally introduced into American architecture as accent pieces that were cheaper than marble, but eventually became a common construction material used for entire buildings. The brownstone was primarily quarried in Portland, CT -- most brownstone buildings in New York were built from Portland brownstone.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/portland-puts-its-stamp-on-an-architectural-era
Other resources: Portland Historical Society; Connecticut History Online -- "Brownstone Industry Digital Collection,” 2012
Tags: #art

Edward Alexander Bouchet—African American Pioneer in the Field of Physics
Born in New Haven, Edward Alexander Bouchet was the first African American to earn a PhD from an American University when he earned a PhD in physics (also one in the first 6 people in US to earn PhD in physics) in 1876. While Bouchet was not the first Black man to enter Yale, he was the first to graduate. He graduated 6th in class of 124, but even with those impressive credentials, professional opportunities were limited. Bouchet taught at the Institute for Colored Youth for 26 years. Not until 1918, the year of Bouchet’s death, did a second African American man obtain a PhD in physics.

Learn more: https://www.aps.org/publications/apsnews/200706/history.cfm
Tags: #education

Nathaniel Palmer and the Discovery of Antarctica
Nathaniel Palmer was a seal hunter from Stonington who was one of the first people (definitely the first American) to "discover" the Antarctic Peninsula. Palmer's discovery resulted from his search for new areas in which to hunt seals. Antarctica was a new frontier and had not been extensively explored in the early 19th century. Earlier in 1820, two other explorers claimed they had sighted Antarctica. Who is credited with a new discovery and what does the discovery means?

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/nathaniel-palmer-discovers-antarctica-today-in-history
Tags: #discovery
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 graduated from the Theological School of St. Lawrence University, becoming the first woman to graduate from an established theological school. Even after graduation Brown struggled to be ordained until, in 1863, she became the first woman ordained as a minister in the Universalist Church. Brown 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, and she went on to serve a church in Wisconsin.

Tags: #religion #womenshistory #suffrage #abolition

Lavinia Warren: Embracing Show Business

Known primarily for her association with her husband Charles Stratton, aka General Tom Thumb and being promoted by P.T. Barnum, Lavinia was a performer with dwarfism who rose to incredible fame during the mid-1800s and retained it until her death in the 1900s. Unlike many fellow performers with disabilities, she was not forced into show business but actively pursued it and had a lucrative career. Having originally started out as a schoolteacher in her native Massachusetts, Lavina went on to have a long and storied career with a wedding that kicked the Civil War news off the front page, meeting Queen Victoria, adventuring into Meiji era Japan to perform with her husband Charles and sister Minnie, and much more. She split her time between Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/charles-stratton-and-lavinia-warren-wed-today-in-history
Other resources: Bridgeport History Center, Barnum Museum (online components available to both)
Tags: #entertainment
Rise of Industrial America (1878-1900)

Connecticut’s Contributions to Flight
There were many innovations in flight associated with Connecticut, including inventor Charles Ritchel who built and sponsored the first controlled flight of a dirigible in America in Hartford in 1878. In addition to other innovators and aeronauts, Connecticut passed the world’s first aeronautical law in 1911. Frederick Renschler established Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company in 1925 in Hartford. He and his team designed the WASP engine, which along with the Hornet, created an engine that had increased power and had high reliability at a low weight.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/charles-ritchel-and-the-dirigible
https://connecticuthistory.org/airborne-pioneers-connecticuts-many-contributions-to-air-transportation
Further resources: New England Air Museum, Connecticut Air and Space Center
#discovery #technology

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

Warner Brothers Corset Company and Women’s Undergarments
The Warner Brothers Corset Company was originally known for making corsets in Bridgeport, Connecticut. In the 1870s, Doctors Ira De Ver and Lucien Warner had noticed the ill effects of corseting on their patients and began to design more flexible garments that relied on the use of Mexican Ixtle, a fibrous plant. This change in design influenced the corset industry, and greater experimentation with material began. Additionally, the company purchased Mary Phelps Jacob’s patent for the modern bra in the 1910s. They were the first to produce the garment and would later go on to invent cup sizing. Based on the nature of the garments, many workers in their Bridgeport factory (especially in the late 1800s into the early 1900s) were women.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/from-bombs-to-bras-world-war-i-conservation-measures-transform-the-lives-of-women
Further resources: Bridgeport History Center holds Warner Brothers Company archives, Lucien Warner’s published memoirs https://archive.org/details/personalmemoirso00warnuoft, The future out of the past : an illustrated history of the Warner Brothers Company on its 90th anniversary, Bedford whaling museum: https://www.cshwhalingmuseum.org/blog/a-woman-has-an-awful-lot-to-thank-a-whale-for
Tags: #womenshistory
Rivers of Outrage
Pollution of Connecticut’s waters by industrial waste and sewage in the decades after the Civil War was arguably the state’s first modern environmental crisis. In the end it was the actions of ordinary citizens, operating through the courts, that began a long journey toward waterway restoration by laying its legal foundations.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/rivers-of-outrage/
Tags: #agriculture #commerce #health #law #nature #socialreform

First Commercial Telephone Exchange Established in New Haven
Civil War veteran George Coy, the manager of a telegraph office in New Haven, founded the first telephone exchange in the world on January 28, 1878. Establishing the first commercial telephone exchange brought the telephone to people’s homes, greatly enhancing communication. Coy also created the first telephone directory.

More resources: Archives & Special Collections, UConn Library.
Tags: #discovery #technology

Pope’s Electric Vehicles and Transportation Innovations
Albert Augustus Pope innovations with bicycles and automobiles explored a new frontier of transportation both in the actual mechanization and in the machines enabling people to travel further and faster. Pope popularized the use of the bicycle and contributed early innovations to automobiles. He championed the Good Roads Movement to promote greater government participation in building America’s roads.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/albert-augustus-pope-1843-1909
Further resources: Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation (https://invention.si.edu/interview-albert-pope),
Tags: #discovery #technology

Frederick Law Olmstead- A Pioneering Landscape Architect
Hartford native, Frederick Law Olmstead, is often described as the founder of landscape architecture in the U.S. The designer of New York City’s Central Park, Olmstead had many commissions in Connecticut, including New Britain’s Walnut Park, Bridgeport’s Beardsley Park, the grounds of what is now the Institute of Living in Hartford. Olmstead was a social reformer who advocated for the rights of the mentally ill.
Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/people/frederick-law-olmsted
Tags: #art #preservation
Progressive to New Eras (1900-1929)

**Waterford’s Seaside Sanatorium and Its Innovative Treatments**

The Seaside Sanatorium in Waterford, CT provided cutting edge medical treatment involving the ocean and the sea and is now a state park. When constructed, it joined four other sanatoriums in Connecticut (Hartford, Norwich, Shelton, Meriden). At Seaside, doctors advocated heliotherapy (exposure to sunlight and fresh, breezy oceanfront air) for patients, who usually stayed between 6 to 12 months. The Sanatorium was designed by well-known architect, Cass Gilbert. After medical advances helped eradicate tuberculosis, the sanatorium was used for adults with pulmonary issues and later became a Geriatric Center and for the treatment of people with mental and emotional disabilities. Designated as a State Park In 2014, the buildings have been abandoned.


Tags: #medicine

**Mary Townsend Seymour Takes a Stand**

In early 20th-century Hartford, Mary Townsend Seymour fought for Civil Rights and ensuring that Black women were included in the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. Seymour helped to found the local NAACP chapter and worked for labor rights. She was the first African American woman to run for the Connecticut State Assembly.


Tags: #socialreform #womenshistory

**Anna Louise James--Pioneer in the Pharmacy Field**

Anna Louise James was the first woman pharmacist in the state of Connecticut. James grew up in Old Saybrook and in 1908 became the first African American women to graduate from the Brooklyn College of Pharmacy. She operated a drugstore in Hartford until 1911, when she began working for her brother-in-law at his pharmacy. Eventually, James took over operation of the pharmacy and renamed it James Pharmacy until her retirement in 1967.

Learn more: [https://connecticuthistory.org/anna-louise-james-makes-history-with-medicine](https://connecticuthistory.org/anna-louise-james-makes-history-with-medicine)

Further resources: Old Saybrook Historical Society
Tags: #womenshistory

**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.


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

International Farm Youth Exchange Leads to Diplomacy and Understanding
The 4-H Clubs of Connecticut originated in 1913 with the establishment of the first club in Mansfield, Connecticut. A part of the United States Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative Extension System, 4-H clubs have aimed to educate Connecticut’s youth in agriculture, home economics, and new technologies. The 4-H Clubs of Connecticut also strives to imbue its members with important life skills, building character through the teaching of a variety of practical skills. The exchange program encourages "peace through understanding" and diplomacy by housing students with host families from around the world.

Learn more: https://archivessearch.lib.uconn.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/206479
Tags: #socialreform #agriculture #education #labor #nature #travel

Hiram Bingham III: Machu Picchu Explorer and Politician
Hiram Bingham III was a distinguished scholar and public servant attached to a line of the Bingham family that has lived in Salem, Connecticut, for generations. After completing his PhD at Harvard University, he became an adjunct professor of Latin American history at Yale University in 1907. Shortly thereafter, Bingham made one of the most famous discoveries in archeological history. In a series of three expeditions from 1911 to 1915, Bingham discovered and excavated the ancient Inca village of Machu Picchu, which was unknown beyond a small number of indigenous people and, possibly, missionaries who had traveled through the area.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/hiram-bingham-iii-machu-picchu-explorer-and-politician/
Tags: #art #education #indigenouspeoples #latinxhistory #latinahistory #latinohistory #nature #preservation #travel

The Connecticut National Guard on the Mexican Border
Between June 27 and June 29, 1916, nearly 3,000 Connecticut National Guardsmen left Camp Holcomb in Niantic, bound for the Mexican border. The reasons for their journey are directly related to events stemming from the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the almost constant state of flux in political and military affairs that followed and to the long history of instability and cross-border incursions that characterized the region in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Learn more: https://www.ctexplored.org/the-connecticut-national-guard-on-the-mexican-border/
Tags: #law #military #latinxhistory #latinohistory #latinahistory
Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

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

Tags: #worldwar2 #military #socialreform #law

Cantwell v. Connecticut is a significant Supreme Court decision (1940) that struck down New Haven’s arrest of Jehovah’s Witnesses for soliciting door to door without getting a license. The Supreme Court ruled this as an impermissible restraint of free speech (it avoided religious issues), marking an important step toward extending federal protections to out-of-doors speech, a new booming area of law (a legal frontier, so to speak) during mid-20th-century.

Learn more: https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/273/cantwell-v-connecticut
Further resources: New Haven newspapers, the searchable Hartford Courant, and other contemporary periodicals.
Tags: #law #religion

Connecticut Lawyer Prosecutes Nazi War Criminals at Nuremberg
Thomas Joseph Dodd, a Norwich-born lawyer from Connecticut, served on the United States’ prosecutorial team as Executive Trial Counsel at the International Military Tribunal (IMT). The Allied nations assembled this tribunal to try Nazi leaders for war crimes. Taking place in 1945-46, the IMT, often referred to as the Nuremberg trial after the German city in which it took place, was an unprecedented effort to hold leaders of a nation state accountable for their wartime actions while also endeavoring to uphold their rights to a fair trial.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticut-lawyer-prosecutes-nazi-war-criminals-at-nuremberg/
Tags: #worldwar2 #military #socialreform #law #religion

Merritt Parkway Creates Scenic Gateway to New England
The first multi-lane, limited-access roadway in Connecticut, the Merritt Parkway, was also one of the first scenic parkways in the nation. Characterized by its landscape design as well as by ornamental Art Deco and Art Moderne bridges, the 37.5-mile parkway improved access to New York City and influenced the development of Fairfield County. It cost $21 million and was the largest public works project in Connecticut at the time of its opening from 1938-1940. Although its construction employed more than 2,000 laborers and met the goals of relieving congestion, preventing accidental loss of life on Route 1, and contributing to Fairfield County’s economic development, the Merritt Parkway did not evolve without problems.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/the-merritt-parkway/
Tags: #labor #preservation #travel
Post War United States (1945-1968)

Griswold v. Connecticut—A Landmark Supreme Court Decision
Estelle Griswold (executive director of Planned Parenthood League of CT) was convicted of having violated the Connecticut law (Barnum Act of 1879) that prohibited the use of contraception. The Supreme Court eventually ruled that this was unconstitutional because it violated the right to marital privacy. The case became a landmark and important precedent because it was the first case to establish a constitutional right to privacy.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/taking-on-the-state-griswold-v-connecticut
Cornell Law School (https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/381/479)
Tags: #law

Activist Pioneer Canon Clinton Jones
Canon Clinton Jones was a pioneer in the LGBTQ+ community in Connecticut and inspired subsequent activist groups and communities. Born in Brookfield, Jones became an ordained minister and served at Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford. Canon Jones was one of a group who formed Project H to provide educational and counseling services for gay people in the Christian community. He provided counseling to gay and transgendered prisoners, created a Hartford chapter of the George W. Henry Foundation

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/canon-clinton-jones-a-revolutionary-figure-in-connecticuts-lgbtq-history
Tags: #socialreform #religion

Maurice Sendak: Literary Pioneer in Redefining Children's Literature
Maurice Sendak, the best-selling author of Where the Wild Things Are, challenged the expectations of children’s literature. He believed in encouraging young children’s imaginations with weird, odd, even grotesque illustrations rather than catering to parental approval or moral narratives.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/where-the-wild-things-are-maurice-sendak
Further resources: https://www.sendakfoundation.org
Tags: #education

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
Ann Petry—A Pioneer in the Literary Field for African American Women

A native of Old Saybrook, Ann Petry was the first African American woman to sell over a million copies of her best-selling novel, The Street. She trained as a pharmacist and worked in the family business, including with her aunt Anna Louise James. Petry began writing for Black newspapers after moving to Harlem. She published The Street, in 1946. Petry continued to write short stories, novels, and several books for children and moved back to Connecticut in 1947. She was active in her local community, serving on the Board of Education and League of Women Voters in Old Saybrook.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/ann-petry-old-saybrooks-bestselling-african-american-author
Further resources: Old Saybrook Historical Society
Tags: #womenshistory

Helen Keller: Communicating 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

Governor Chester Bowles Serves as Ambassador to India

Chester Bowles, who served as the 78th Governor of Connecticut and later member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Connecticut, served as the 3rd and 8th United States Ambassador to India under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Truman and Eisenhower. While serving as Ambassador to India, he helped fight local famines and improve agricultural productivity. Bowles was an advocate of strong relations with India and believed that the two nations shared fundamental democratic values.

Learn more: https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/12/resources/4557/collection_organization
Tags: #travel #socialreform

The Battle for Cockenoe Island

In the middle of the 17th century, a Native American known as Cockenoe or Checkanoe, signed a deed giving an island (now known as Cockenoe Island) to the fledgling town of Norwalk. Just over 180 years later, in 1835, the island became a part of Westport, when that municipality emerged from parts of Norwalk, Fairfield, and Weston. Then, in the mid-1960s, the Bridgeport-based power company United Illuminating (UI) acquired the island. In August of 1967, the company announced plans to build a nuclear power plant on the island. On March 10, 1969, hundreds of Westport residents traveled to the Connecticut State Capitol in Hartford to support a bill giving Connecticut towns priority over utility companies in cases of eminent domain.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/the-battle-for-cockenoe-island/
Tags: #agriculture #commerce #law #nature #preservation #technology
**Tobacco Valley: Puerto Rican Farm Workers in Connecticut**

In 1947, the Department of Labor of Puerto Rico established its Migration Division to arrange contracts between mainland farmers and unemployed Puerto Ricans. Division recruiters traveled the winding island roads in cars with bullhorns, distributed leaflets, and placed ads in newspapers announcing good jobs in the United States. Puerto Rican farm workers labored in many parts of Connecticut. They pruned trees and watered plants in nurseries in Meriden, weeded tomatoes in Cheshire, and picked mushrooms near Willimantic. Most, however, came to work tobacco in the Connecticut River Valley. The region, known as “Tobacco Valley,” once extended from Hartford, Connecticut, to Springfield, Massachusetts, covering an area 30 miles wide and 90 miles long. Just as surely as they had planted and tended the crops in Tobacco Valley, Puerto Rican farm workers began to put down their own roots in Hartford and other cities throughout Connecticut. Together, with other Puerto Rican migrants who had come to labor in factories, these former agricultural workers helped form the nuclei of entirely new communities.

Learn more: [https://www.ctexplored.org/tobacco-valley-puerto-rican-farm-workers-in-connecticut/](https://www.ctexplored.org/tobacco-valley-puerto-rican-farm-workers-in-connecticut/)

Tags: #agriculture #labor #latinahistory #latinohistory #latinxhistory #nature #socialreform

**The Rise of the Black Panther Party in Connecticut**

In Bridgeport, José Rene Gonzalves of California organized the first Black Panther Party chapter in Connecticut. He soon started chapters in New Haven, Waterbury, and Hartford. After establishing local leadership, national figures like Ericka Huggins came to the state to run political education courses and organize Panther programs. “This is a revolution,” Gonzalves told a Stamford crowd. “It’s a revolution against the system that teaches a man to be less than a man. A revolution against ignorance, fear and hate.” The Panthers’ goal, he said, was to “take the strength from the few and give the power to the people.”


Tags: #blackhistory #education #law #socialreform #voting

**Clare Boothe Luce Changed Perceptions about Women in Business and Politics**

A resident of Greenwich, Clare Boothe Luce won election to the United States Congress in 1942 as a representative from Connecticut. She was the first woman to represent the state in the U.S. House of Representatives. Her entrance into politics was not her first foray into the public eye, however. By the time of her election, she was already an established author, editor, and playwright. Recognized for her efforts to reshape perceptions of women in the realms of politics and society, Luce later became the United States Ambassador to Italy—the first woman to hold such an appointment to a major European country.

Learn more: [https://connecticuthistory.org/clare-boothe-luce/](https://connecticuthistory.org/clare-boothe-luce/)

Tags: #law #art #socialreform #womenshistory #travel #government
The U.S.S. Nautilus Passes Under the Polar Ice Cap
Built in Groton in the 1950s as the first atomic powered submarine, in 1958, it was the first vessel to go from the Atlantic to the Pacific as it journeyed underneath the Polar Ice Cap on August 3, 1958. Its journey to this new frontier was big news at the time. The U.S.S. Nautilus was decommissioned in 1980 after a 25-year career and currently is part of the Submarine Force Museum.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/uss-nautilus-passes-under-the-north-pole
Tags: #discovery #military #technology

Constance Baker Motley on the Frontiers of Expanding Black and Women’s Civil Rights.
Born in New Haven, Constance Baker Motley obtained a law degree and became a central figure in the Civil Rights Movement and worked on the NAACP’s fight for school desegregation. Motley was the first Black women ever elected to the New York State Senate, and in 1964 became the first Black female federal judge. She spent her later life living in Chester.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/people/constance-baker-motley
Further resources: Civil Rights Queen: Constance Baker Motley and the Struggle for Struggle Equality by Tomiko Brown-Nagin
Tags: #socialreform #womenshistory

Ella Grasso
Ella Tambussi Grasso is Connecticut’s first female governor and the first woman in the United States to become governor in her own right. She had previously served in the Connecticut General Assembly and the U.S. House of Representatives. Grasso was elected to a second term but after being diagnosed with ovarian cancer, she resigned her office, dying shortly afterwards in 1981.

Tags: #womenshistory #government
Contemporary United States (1969-present)

Lyme Disease
In the 1970s, many people in the town of Lyme reported health issues like skin rashes, fatigue, and headaches. While doctors were noticing some patterns, nobody knew exactly what was happening to these patients or why. Two mothers from Connecticut pushed and advocated for the medical community to figure out what was going on. Dr. Allen Steere was starting a rheumatology fellowship at Yale around this time. He helped discover the bacterium that we now know to cause Lyme Disease. Later, another scientist (Dr. Willy Burgdorfer) connected the bacterium to deer ticks.

Tags: #medicine

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.

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

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.

Tags: #law #socialreform #commerce
Capital Punishment in Connecticut: Changing Views
Connecticut’s struggles with the issue of capital punishment date back to its earliest days as a colony. Starting in 1636 and ending in 2005, Connecticut witnessed 158 executions. Throughout this period, changing ideas about crime, punishment, and human rights played out in public debates about the effectiveness and morality of capital punishment.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/capital-punishment-in-connecticut-changing-views/
Tags: #law #socialreform

Charles Tisdale Campaigns for Congress
Best known as the director of ABCD – Action for Bridgeport Community Development – Charles B. Tisdale was a giant in Bridgeport’s community. In 1976, he ran a congressional campaign for the House of Representatives, making him the first African American in Connecticut to win the democratic nomination. While he lost the race, the work done would catch the eye of President Jimmy Carter and see Tisdale serve at a national level within the administration for four years.

Learn more: https://ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/110002%3A19514
Tags: #blackhistory #law #voting

Connecticut Yankee and Millstone: 48 Years of Nuclear Power
Connecticut Yankee Atomic Power Company, Connecticut’s first nuclear power plant, began commercial operation, in Haddam Neck, on January 1, 1968. It was a time of high expectations for the economic potential of peaceful nuclear energy. As a competitor with coal, oil, and other fossil fuels, nuclear power in the United States has had mixed success since the 1960s. While Connecticut Yankee operated for nearly 29 years, generating over 110 billion kilowatt hours of electricity, high operational costs led to its closing in 1996. Low oil and natural gas prices; increased safety regulation; periodic plant shutdowns; and public concern about the dangers of radiation leaks and waste were important factors.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticut-yankee-and-millstone-46-years-of-nuclear-power-2/
Tags: #agriculture #commerce #innovation #labor #nature #technology

Frontiers of Music: the Joe Snow Punk Rock Collection
During the 1970s and 1980s, a thriving underground punk and hardcore scene thrived in Connecticut. Songs were often short, fast-tempo with hard-edge melodies, instruments and singing. Punk music was often anti-establishment in nature. The Joe Snow Punk Rock Collection is available for research at the University of Connecticut Thomas J. Dodd Research Center and exemplifies the "do it yourself" nature of punk enthusiasts.

Learn more: https://connecticuthistory.org/hardcore-connecticut-documenting-the-states-punk-rock-scene
Further resources: https://archivessearch.lib.uconn.edu/repositories/2/resources/935
Tags: #music
Finders Not Keepers: Yale Returns Artifacts to Peru

High in the Andes Mountains, Peruvians have been lining up to see a collection of antiquities that have finally returned home. The objects from the Inca site of Machu Picchu spent the past 100 years at Yale University in Connecticut, where they were at the center of a long-running international custody battle. Now, the university is giving back thousands of ceramics, jewelry and human bones from the Peabody Museum in New Haven to the International Center for the Study of Machu Picchu and Inca Culture.

Learn more: https://www.npr.org/2012/01/01/143653050/finders-not-keepers-yale-returns-artifacts-to-peru

Tags: #art #education #indigenouspeoples #law #latinxhistory #latinohistory #latinahistory #preservation #socialreform