

CONNECTICUT

HISTORY
DAY

Connecticut Topic List

2025-26 School Year



Welcome to **Connecticut History Day!** Connecticut History Day is an affiliate program of National History Day, an academic program for students in grades 6-12. Students choose a topic of their own choice, which this year relates to the Theme of *Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History*.

We want to thank our colleagues at Connecticut Humanities, who collaborated with us on this year's **List of Connecticut Topics**. There are a few additions to the usual list of topics: three focused articles with guiding questions on Moses Dunbar, Mary Townsend Seymour, and the 1991 Gay Rights Law. These resources are followed by a list of Connecticut topics divided by historical era. Make sure to check out [this article by ConnecticutHistory.Org](#) with suggested topics.

We encourage students to explore this list of potential Connecticut topics. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Students can explore other topics through [Connecticut Explored](#), [ConnecticutHistory.Org](#), and the [Connecticut State Library](#). Museums are another great resource– from state-wide institutions like the Connecticut State Museum to town museums.

Why explore a Connecticut topic?

- There are amazing (and largely unknown) Connecticut stories to explore.
- Local topics give students an opportunity to learn about their local community!
- Researching a local topic gives students easier access to resources since museums and libraries are in closer proximity.
- Museum staff and volunteers love helping students! They are great resources.
- Every national topic has a local connection. Revolutionary War? Civil Rights Movement? Significant court decisions? They all happened here in Connecticut!

The Connecticut History Day Team is here to help you and your students through the History Day journey. Reach out to info@historydayct.org with questions or to schedule a free classroom workshop on this year's Annual Theme of *Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History*.



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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 catalogs topics and chronological order with tags to help students find themes. To search tags, hold CTRL+F and search for the following ta

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

Moses Dunbar: Connecticut Loyalist

While most Connecticut residents supported the patriot cause during the American Revolution, a small group of loyalists sided with Great Britain. In March 1777, Moses Dunbar became the only loyalist executed by a civil court in Connecticut during the American Revolution.

Moses Dunbar was born on June 3, 1746, in Wallingford, Connecticut to John and Temperance Dunbar. Around 1758, the Dunbar family moved to the Northbury area (now Plymouth) of Waterbury. Dunbar married Phoebe (or Phebe) Jerome of Farmington. Moses and Phoebe joined the Church of England (Anglican Church), angering Dunbar's father and distancing them from their family. Many Anglicans in Connecticut were viewed with suspicion as potential loyalists.

As the Revolutionary War ramped up in late 1775 and early 1776, loyalists (colonists who were loyal to King George III and Great Britain) faced increasingly violent pressure from their neighbors and the colonial government. Local committees of inspection formed in many Connecticut towns to ensure that everyone was aligned with the revolutionary cause. To avoid violent mob attacks, imprisonment, and public humiliation, many loyalists moved to safer places like New Hampshire, Nova Scotia, and Great Britain.

Loyalists in Dunbar's community were frequently attacked; they began hiding in a local cave that became known as the "Tory Den." A mob attacked Dunbar and forced him to "sign a Paper Containing many Falsehoods." In December 1775, Connecticut's 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" criminalizing aiding or joining British forces.

After his wife's death in 1776, Dunbar was left to care for their children and farm. Members of the Waterbury committee of inspection arrested Dunbar and brought him to the New Haven County jail twice despite his promise that he would keep quiet and "Enter into a Voluntary Confinement" on his farm. Both times authorities released Dunbar because there were no specific charges against him.

In June 1776, the Dunbars moved to Farmington, where Moses became engaged to Esther Adams. A few months later, Dunbar fled to Long Island where he joined a loyalist regiment in the British army. He returned to Connecticut and convinced eight others to join his regiment, including his soon-to-be brother-in-law. After marrying Esther, Dunbar returned to New York. In October 1776, Connecticut's General Assembly passed legislation that strengthened the penalty for joining the British to death.

On his second trip back from New York in January 1777, officials arrested Dunbar and found his captain's warrant papers. They brought him to Farmington where justices of the peace recorded Dunbar's testimony and sent him to the Hartford jail. The Hartford Superior Court tried Dunbar for treason on January 23, 1777. Dunbar pled not guilty, but the jury convicted him of joining the British, recruiting others for his loyalist regiment, and providing intelligence and sentenced him to be hanged.

On March 1, Dunbar attempted to escape from prison but was quickly recaptured. As customary in the 18th century, public executions were spectacles for the entire community and a crowd gathered to witness Dunbar's hanging on March 19, 1777, in Hartford.

In 1875, almost a century after Dunbar's execution, copies of Dunbar's final statement and his last letter to his children were found in a house scheduled for demolition in Harwinton, Connecticut, which may have belonged to his daughter Bede. In addition to encouraging his children to be good

Anglicans, Dunbar's statement and letter show his unapologetic resolve and lack of repentance for his support of the British and his convicted crimes.

Moses Dunbar's execution was a warning to deter other loyalists from supporting Great Britain. Arrests for treason during the American Revolution were relatively common, but execution was rare. While a few other men were hanged for treason during the American Revolution in Connecticut through a conviction in a military court, Dunbar was the only person convicted and hanged for treason in Connecticut by a civil court.

Adapted from <https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticuts-loyal-subjects-toryism-and-the-american-revolution/>

- How did patriots and loyalists differ in their view of the American **Revolution**?
- What legal and political tools did Connecticut use to suppress dissent, and how do those compare to the ideals of liberty promoted by the **Revolution**?
- How did Moses Dunbar's neighbors **react** to his actions?

Mary Townsend Seymour

Mary Townsend Seymour was a leading civil rights activist and suffragist in [Hartford](#) during the early 1900s. She dedicated her life to fighting for voting rights for women and fair wages for Black factory workers. She is most famous for helping to start the Hartford chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.). This national organization, founded in 1909, worked to promote justice and civil rights for African Americans.

During this time many southern African Americans were moving to the North, Midwest, and West to find better jobs and escape racial violence and unfair treatment—a major event called the Great Migration. Hartford's Black population increased by 143 percent in the decade between 1910 and 1920, a shift which increased racial tensions and prompted a discussion of segregating Hartford's schools.

On October 9, 1917, Mary and her husband Frederick hosted a group of local activists and leaders at their home, including three national N.A.A.C.P. leaders: W.E.B. Du Bois, Mary White Ovington, and James Weldon Johnson. The group formed the Hartford chapter of the N.A.A.C.P, electing William Service Bell as president and Mary Townsend Seymour as vice president.

Seymour managed the day-to-day needs of the chapter and became the organization's spokesperson when William Bell went overseas to serve in World War I. She periodically wrote to newspapers and magazines to shed light on injustices. For example, as hundreds of thousands of African Americans served in World War I, Seymour wrote a letter to the [Hartford Courant](#) to object to the way their articles referred to Black soldiers during [World War I](#). Unfortunately, the editorial response printed directly beneath Seymour's letter was dismissive and declared that "the writer is too sensitive."

Through her work at the N.A.A.C.P., Seymour heard about workers being cheated out of their wages. Seymour went undercover at one of the factories to learn more. Afterwards, Seymour helped 60 women form a union and gain representation in the Central Labor Union, an organization made up of representatives from many different unions. In June 1920, the N.A.A.C.P.'s national magazine, *The Crisis*, published Seymour's article exposing the poor working conditions for Black women in Hartford's [tobacco](#) factories.

By the early 20th century, the American suffrage movement had a long history of intentionally excluding Black women. Nonetheless, Seymour persistently wrote to white suffragists and participated in numerous voting rights organizations, including the Connecticut League of Women Voters.

In 1920, after fighting for women's right to vote, Seymour ran for state representative on the Farmer-Labor ballot. Although unsuccessful, she was the first African American woman to run for the Connecticut General Assembly. Two years later, Seymour ran for Connecticut secretary of the state. Even though she lost again, newspapers in states as far away as Kansas and Oklahoma wrote about the impact of her campaign.

In 1952, the Hartford Courant Magazine published an article celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Hartford N.A.A.C.P., describing Seymour as a "woman of culture whose mind and heart went out, not only to the oppressed people of her own race, but to subject people everywhere." Mary Townsend Seymour died aged 83 in 1957 after a long and impactful career.

Despite Seymour's profound impact on civil rights, her involvement was not widely recognized or celebrated outside of the Hartford community for much of the late 20th century. Even during her lifetime, many official records did not capture the full extent of her influence. For example, the US

Censuses never listed a profession for Mary and there is only one known image of her—a grainy photograph from the *Hartford Courant*.

However, in 2006, three eighth grade girls from [Bloomfield](#), Connecticut nominated Townsend for induction into Connecticut Women’s Hall of Fame. Today, the [Connecticut Freedom Trail](#) includes her gravesite in Hartford’s Old North Cemetery on its list of sites.

Adapted from:

<https://connecticuthistory.org/mary-townsend-seymour-hartfords-organizer-activist-and-suffragist/>

- When confronted with injustices, how did Mary Seymour Townsend react? What techniques did she use to advocate for change?
- What reforms did Mary Seymour Townsend advocate for?
- Was Mary Seymour Townsend a revolutionary figure? How did race and gender affect the way her work was remembered?

1991 Gay Rights Law

On May 1, 1991, Connecticut Governor Lowell P. Weicker Jr. signed Public Act No. 91-58, “An Act Concerning Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation” into law. Known as “the gay-rights bill,” it was one of the first laws in Connecticut to protect LGBTQ+ rights. This [legislation](#) made it illegal to discriminate against people based on their sexual orientation when it came to housing, employment, and credit.

The Connecticut legislature introduced the first version of the gay-rights bill in 1973. In 1975, Connecticut’s Senate became the first legislative chamber in the country to pass an anti-discrimination gay-rights bill, but the House of Representatives rejected it. Over the next 16 years, various iterations of a gay-rights bill failed in the Connecticut General Assembly.

As the fight over gay rights and anti-discrimination legislation continued through the 1970s and 1980s, advocacy groups formed on both sides of the issue. The Connecticut Citizens for Decency purchased ads in the [Hartford Courant](#) to promote their opinions against homosexuality and showed up at public hearings wearing blue berets and carrying Bibles. The Connecticut Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Rights and other gay rights activist groups worked to persuade lawmakers and organized protests and vigils in support of the gay-rights bills.

After the murder of [Richard Reihl](#), a gay [Wethersfield](#) man, in May 1988, the Connecticut LGBTQ+ community began to push more urgently for civil rights and protections. While the gay rights movement had been active for years, anger over Reihl’s murder—in addition to the ongoing AIDS epidemic—motivated activists even more.

Supporters of the gay-rights bill became frustrated after years of failed attempts to pass it. The 1987 bill got the closest to becoming law, but it was rejected after a 73-73 tie in the House. After the General Assembly rejected the 1989 version of the bill, more than three hundred activists protested outside the State Capitol. Several dozen protestors made it into the gallery, where they hung banners that read “We refuse to disappear.” Several months later, in February 1990, Capitol Police arrested 12 members of the Coalition after they interrupted Governor William O’Neill’s budget speech to the General Assembly by unfolding a banner in the gallery that demanded lesbian and gay rights

Several different factors helped the 1991 bill finally pass. The opposition of the Roman Catholic Church was one of the largest barriers in previous years, but the 1991 bill included exemptions for religious institutions. Catholic bishops opted not to oppose the legislation as they had in the past. Both supporters and opponents voiced their support and concerns at the public hearings and packed the gallery during the floor debates.

In December 1990, state Rep. Joseph Grabarz Jr. (D-Bridgeport) publicly announced that he was gay, becoming the first openly gay state lawmaker in Connecticut. During the House debate over this bill, after listening to some of his colleagues refer to homosexuality as “wrong,” Rep. Grabarz took the floor and said, “it’s not everyday that someone gets to travel to their place of employment, as I did today, to hear their fellow co-workers and colleagues debate the protection of their civil rights and so if I actually appear a little nervous, I am.”

On April 17, 1991, the Senate passed the bill by a vote of 21 to 14, days after the House of Representatives passed it by a vote of 81 to 65. With the passage of the law, Connecticut became the

fourth state to prohibit discrimination against homosexuals—after Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Hawaii.

The 1991 gay-rights law was a significant milestone for the LGBTQ+ community in Connecticut, but it was not perfect. It included several exemptions for religious organizations, ROTC, owner-occupied multiple family homes, and child adoption/foster situations. The law made it very clear that “nothing in this act shall be deemed or construed to mean the state of Connecticut condones homosexuality or bisexuality or any equivalent lifestyle.” In the following years, Connecticut’s LGBTQ+ community continued to advocate for acceptance and rights such as marriage equality and protections for transgender people—a great number of these fights continue to this day.

Adapted from:

<https://connecticuthistory.org/eighteen-years-in-the-making-connecticuts-1991-gay-rights-law/>

- How did supporters of the gay-rights bill **react** to the failed attempts to pass it during the 1970s and 1980s?
- How was the gay-rights bill **revolutionary**?
- Did everyone view the 1991 gay-rights bill as a **reform**? Why or why not?

First Encounters and the Colonial Era (pre-1775)

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 led 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. 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

The Fundamental Orders

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.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-free-consent-of-the-people-thomas-hooker-and-the-fundamental-orders>, <https://connecticuthistory.org/creative-license-or-fundamental-fact/>

Tags: #government

John Winthrop Jr. and the Connecticut Witch Panic - Judicial Reform in 17th Century Connecticut Colony

The first witch trials in New England were not in Salem, MA, but in Connecticut. After eleven people died between 1647-1663, John Winthrop Jr, first governor of the Connecticut Colony, was instrumental in establishing legal precedents protecting Connecticut's citizens from deadly accusations of witchcraft.

Learn more: <https://todayinhistory.com/2024/11/04/november-4-connecticut-founder-chemist-john-winthrop-jr-arrives-in-america/>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WD3tpTU-lGk>, <https://www.scribd.com/document/132699692/New-Englands-Other-Witch-Hunt>

Tags: #law, #government, #womenshistory

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

Mohegan Indians v. Connecticut (1704-1775)

The lawsuits between the Mohegan tribe and Connecticut were the first British cases to rule on indigenous land ownership. They 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 of approximately 20,000 acres in southeastern Connecticut. The Mohegan claimed that the land had been reserved for their use while the heirs of John Mason claimed that the Mohegan tribe had given it to their ancestor. The Masons then transferred the land to the colonial government, attesting that the Mohegans had received enough land to sustain them. Both sides argued that the land transfer was invalid, starting almost a century of dispute. The Dudley Commission found in favor of the Mohegan Tribe, but subsequent commissions of review sided with Connecticut. In 1773, the British Privy Council gave its final ruling, concluding 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.

Learn more: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohegan_Indians_v._Connecticut

Tags: #law #indigenouspeoples

Connecticut and the West Indies: Sugar Spurs Trans-Atlantic Trade

In 1649, Connecticut began trading with the West Indies, exchanging goods like livestock, lumber, and produce for sugar, molasses, rum, coffee, and spices. The main focus was on sugar, as it was needed during this time when tea was introduced to the public. Ships from ports such as New Haven and New London made regular visits to islands like Barbados and St. Kitts. This trade supported Connecticut's economy but also connected the colony to the larger transatlantic system that included slavery.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticut-and-the-west-indies-trade/>

Tags: #commerce #slavery #discovery #labor #nauticalhistory

The White Pine Acts

In the 1700s, there were a series of British laws called the White Pine Acts. These laws prohibited people in New England from harvesting white pines larger than 24 inches wide, so that the Royal Navy could use them. Many people in Connecticut ignored the law, seeing it as unfair and harmful to local businesses. Their resistance reflected growing tensions with British authority before the American Revolution.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-white-pine-acts-who-knew/>

Tags: #government #revolutionarywar #commerce #socialreform #nature

Oystering in Connecticut

Oystering in Connecticut dates back to Native American and colonial times, when oysters were plentiful in the tidal rivers and coastal waters. As demand grew, overharvesting led to early laws that would restrict the harvest and protect oyster spawning. These included seasonal bans and limits per person. In the mid-1800s, Connecticut pioneered oyster cultivation through planting shell and leasing private oyster grounds. The industry had boomed, peaking in the late 1800s with Connecticut housing the world's largest fleet of oyster steamers. However, pollution, disease, and habitat loss caused severe decline in the 20th century. Today, the oyster industry is starting to recover.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/oystering-in-connecticut-from-colonial-times-to-today/>

Tags: #nauticalhistory #nature #government

Revolutionary War and a New Nation (1775-1815)

Benedict Arnold

Benedict Arnold was a businessman, soldier, patriot, and brilliant strategist. What caused him to turn traitor? Born and raised in Connecticut, Arnold led the first troops outside of Massachusetts to help reinforce the Patriots during the American Revolution. He was lauded as a hero after the Battle of Saratoga but called a traitor after he changed sides and led the British attack on Groton and New London.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/people/benedict-arnold/>

Tags: #revolutionarywar #military

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

Black Loyalists of Connecticut - a reaction to Revolutionary promises

Black individuals have been part of Connecticut's military history from the very beginning. By the time of the nation's first census in 1790, 20% of Black men listed as heads of households had served in the army. While some enslavers sent enslaved men to serve in their place, many in the colonies, including General George Washington, held negative views about Black men fighting alongside them. As a result, many Black individuals chose to fight for the British. Unlike the Continental Army, the British often promised land, financial incentives, and most importantly, freedom. For many, this presented a powerful opportunity to secure a better future. However, the promises made by the British were not always fully honored. For example, the story of Toney Bartram illustrates both the risks and rewards that could come from trusting the crown. Still, many Black Loyalists managed to seize the opportunities that did arise, building new lives for themselves and their families despite the uncertain outcomes.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/black-loyalist-refugees-toney-escapes-during-the-burning-of-fairfield/>, <https://archives.novascotia.ca/africanns/book-of-negroes/results/?Search=Toney>

Tags: #blackhistory, #revolutionarywar, #slavery

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, primarily in the southwestern portion of the state, particularly in Fairfield County. 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." Many Tories joined the British Army to fight against the rebels. After the war, Tories had to decide whether to flee to another British-controlled colony, or stay and face prosecution by the new government.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticuts-loyal-subjects-toryism-and-the-american-revolution/>

Tags: #revolutionarywar #law #military

Who Were The Pinto Brothers?

According to Wiernick's *History Of The Jews In America*, published in 1912, four brothers from New Haven - Abraham, William, Jacob and Solomon Pinto - all participated in the American Revolution. Abraham and William were soldiers, Jacob served on New Haven's Committee of Safety, and Solomon was an officer, later inducted into the Society of The Cincinnati. It is thought that the Pinto brothers were members of the first Jewish family in New Haven, but not a lot is known about them.

Learn more: <https://dailynutmeg.com/blogs/blog/new-haven-jewish-history-passage-rites-redux>,
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b4/History_of_the_Jews_in_America%2C_from_the_period_of_the_discovery_of_the_New_World_to_the_present_time_%28IA_cu3192403_2764205%29.pdf

Tags: #revolutionarywar #jewish

The Connecticut Compromise - reaction or reform?

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 Creation 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

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

Levi Pease and the development of stage route

Levi Pease, known as the “Father of the Turnpike” was a transportation innovator who transformed travel on the East Coast and improved mail delivery. Many of his innovations are still used in railroads today. Pease opened his first long-distance stage route between Hartford and Somers before expanding his business into Massachusetts and New York. He won the first contract from the U.S. Post Office to deliver mail and improved mail delivery between Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/levi-pease-stage-route-and-transportation-innovator>

Tags: #travel

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

Eli Whitney’s Gun Manufacturing Process

Did you know that Eli Whitney aided in developing interchangeable parts for guns? After getting a contract from the U.S. government in 1798, he spearheaded the development of a new milling machine that could accurately cut metal according to a pattern. This meant that gun parts could be standardized, guns could be manufactured more quickly, and unskilled laborers could put together guns instead of highly skilled gunsmiths. The Whitney milling machine was so effective that modern versions of it are still in use today.

Learn more: <https://www.eliwhitney.org/museum/about-eli-whitney/factory>

Tags: #technology #innovation

Venture Smith, from Slavery to Freedom

Venture Smith was born in West Africa around 1730. He was enslaved and eventually brought to North America. Smith lived in Connecticut, where he diligently worked and eventually was able to purchase his freedom, along with the freedom of his wife and children. Over time, he became a successful landowner and businessman. In 1798, he shared his life story, making it one of the earliest published narratives by a formerly enslaved person in the United States.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/venture-smith-from-slavery-to-freedom/>, <https://www.iaismuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/preserve-booklet-venture-smith-homestead.pdf>, <https://youtu.be/OfcLJxKGuAU>

Tags: #blackhistory #slavery #socialreform #labor #education #abolition

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 turning point for the state, changing the existing state government as well as the rights of many Connecticut residents. Some of the new ideas and changes included establishing the Senate, the disestablishment of the Congregational Church, and disenfranchising black male voters.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/an-orderly-decent-government-a-new-state-a-new-constitution-1776-1818/>

Tags: #government

Reforming 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 #socialreform

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 African American men and women were not allowed to vote, their 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. During 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.

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

Further resources: <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. Teachers believed they were "civilizing backwards peoples." While students gained some skills they could use to help their communities navigate the 19th century world, many students refused to give up all of their cultural ways which were under assault to assimilate.

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

Tags: #indigenouspeoples #socialreform #education

Ebenezer Bassett

Ebenezer Bassett was 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, Harriet Beecher Stowe. 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. October 16, 1859, Brown and his followers attempted to encourage enslaved people to revolt against their owners by seizing the U.S. Armory in Harper's Ferry, WV, and capturing two slaveholders and freeing their slaves.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/john-brown-a-portrait-of-violent-abolitionism/>, [John Brown's Raid \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/learn/visit/visit-details.cfm/john-brown-raid)

Tags: #abolition #blackhistory #civilwar #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, 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>

Tags: #education

The African Mission School, 1828-1830

On October 6, 1828, the African Mission School opened for the purpose of training African American men to become Episcopal clergy in Liberia, Africa. Liberia was founded through the efforts of the American Colonization Society (ACS) which believed that formerly enslaved Africans and African Americans should be returned to Africa. The school was connected to Hartford Center Church and had board members from Washington (now Trinity) College. Six African American men attended the school and three were ordained in 1830. Several did work as clergy and teachers in Liberia.

Learn more: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/african-mission-school/>

Further Resources: <https://dsp.domains.trincoll.edu/TrinityAndSlavery/nathaniel-wheaton/>

Tags: #blackhistory #slavery #religion

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

Prudence Crandall and Sarah 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>

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://www.courant.com/hartford-magazine/hc-hm-ct-anti-slavery-kansas-colony-20200329-20220806-qx3gd4bzk5cgdndwdsdwjll3cm-story.html>

Further resources: <https://archive.org/details/connecticutkansa00osme/page/n13/mode/1up>

Tags: #slavery #civilwar #abolition

Horace Wells and the Discovery of Anesthesia

In the early 19th century Hartford dentists Horace Wells and William Morton played instrumental roles in the development of anesthesia for dental and other medical applications.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/horace-wells-discovers-pain-free-dentistry/>

Tags: #medicine

Jackson v. Bulloch and the End of Slavery in Connecticut

Nancy Jackson, a woman enslaved by James Bulloch of Georgia, asked Connecticut's courts to grant her freedom in 1837. Bulloch split his time between homes in Georgia and Connecticut and had left Jackson enslaved in Connecticut for two years while he traveled. Connecticut law forbade slave owners from "leaving" slaves in the state, and ruled that Jackson should, indeed, be free.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/jackson-v-bulloch-and-the-end-of-slavery-in-connecticut/>

Tags: #blackhistory #law #slavery

Sylvester Graham: Progressive Advocate for Healthy Living

Sylvester Graham was born in Suffield, Connecticut, in 1794. He was a minister and health reformer who promoted vegetarianism, whole grains, and temperance. Graham believed that physical and moral health were connected. He urged people to avoid meat, alcohol, and processed foods. Graham created Graham flour and Graham bread as healthier alternatives for the public. Although many people disapproved of his ideas, his impact on American lifestyles can still be seen today.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/sylvester-graham-progressive-advocate-for-healthy-living/>

Tags: #health #socialreform #medicine #education #innovation

The Incident of the Stonington Schooner 'Breakwater': A View from Indian Country

In the early 1800s, Native men from tribes like the Pequot and Mohegan worked in Connecticut's maritime industry as sailors, riggers, and shipbuilders. In 1830, the schooner *Breakwater* left Stonington with a crew that included Indigenous mariners such as Moses Brushell and Henry Shantup. The ship was seized near the Falkland Islands, but the crew eventually regained control and returned home. The Breakwater incident led to at least two significant court cases. Stories like this show that Native peoples were not on the sidelines of history but actively involved in shaping it.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-incident-of-the-stonington-schooner-breakwater-a-view-from-indian-country/>

Tags: #indigenouspeoples #nauticalhistory #commerce #discovery

Maria Miller Stewart and the Abolitionist Movement

Born in Hartford in 1802, Maria Miller Stewart's parents were African indentured servants and she was born indentured. Maria moved to Boston when she was sixteen and embarked upon a remarkable career as an abolitionist activist and public speaker. Maria was a revolutionary figure as her presence in the abolitionist movement represents the beginning of black women's public participation in social justice causes - influencing Sojourner Truth and Ida B. Wells-Barnett - and places Stewart herself at the beginnings of intersectional Black feminism.

Learn more: <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/maria-miller-stewart>,

<https://www.nps.gov/people/maria-w-stewart.htm>,

<https://archive.org/details/meditationsfromp00stew> (A collection of her writings and speeches), <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book//lookupid?key=olbp29300> (A second collection of her writings and speeches)

Further resources:

<https://www.amazon.com/Maria-Stewart-Americas-Political-Writer/dp/0253204461>
(biography)

Tags: #blackhistory #womenshistory #abolition

Bronson Alcott - Leading an Educational Revolution

Born in Wolcott, CT in 1799, Bronson Alcott developed new methods for teaching that prioritized independent thinking, personal progress and the idea that true learning is not merely the acquisition of facts but the development of a reflective state of mind. He taught in the Connecticut towns of Cheshire and Bristol. Bronson's radical re-imagining of American education led to foundational changes that continue to support our educational system today, including kindergarten, arts and music, and the Montessori Method.

Learn more: <https://archive.org/details/observationsp00alcogooq>,
<https://archive.org/details/conversationswi01alcogooq>

Further resources:

<https://archive.org/details/amosbronsonalcot00dahl/page/50/mode/1up> (a biography),
<https://louisamayalcott.org/a-bronson-alcott> (Orchard House Museum - everything about the Alcotts)

Tags: #education #innovation

The Smith Sisters

In 1873, sisters Abby and Julia Smith of Glastonbury, Connecticut, protested what they saw as unfair taxation. Since they were unmarried women who owned property but couldn't vote, they argued "taxation without representation" was unjust. They refused to pay a raised tax bill and then the town seized and auctioned their beloved Alderney cows. The sisters ended up repurchasing the cows and took the matter to court, eventually winning their case.

Learn more:

<https://connecticuthistory.org/the-smith-sisters-their-cows-and-womens-rights-in-glastonbury/>, <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/the-smiths-of-glastonbury>

Tags: #womenshistory #suffrage #law

Civil War and Reconstruction (1860-1877)

The Colt Revolver and a Revolution in Manufacturing

Hartford native Samuel Colt invented a new type of gun called a revolver. In order to mass produce the gun and make it easier to repair them, his workers assembled the revolvers using interchangeable parts. Manufacturers had been trying to produce interchangeable parts for decades, but Colt was the first to achieve it by using precise molds and specialized machine tools. The Colt Armory attracted talented mechanics from all over the northeast, many of whom went on to manufacture other goods the same way, like bicycles, sewing machines and automobiles.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/samuel-colt-and-sewing-machines/>

Further Resources: <https://museumofcthistory.org/research-guide-colt-manufacturing-co/>

Tags: #innovation #technology

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>

Further Resources: Lyman Allyn, Weir Farm National Historic Park

Tags: #art

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 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 mean?

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/nathaniel-palmer-discovers-antarctica-today-in-history>

Tags: #discovery #travel

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 eventually forced her out of the church in Bridgeport and she went on to serve a church in Wisconsin.

Learn more: <http://connecticuthistory.org/americas-first-ordained-woman-minister-olympia-brown-and-bridgeports-universalist-church/>

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. Lavinia had 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>

Further resources: Bridgeport History Center, <https://barnum-museum.org/explore/collections/>

Tags: #entertainment #womenshistory

The Peace Movement in Litchfield

In the 1860s, some residents of Litchfield and Goshen, Connecticut opposed the Civil War. They called for peace through public displays like waving white flags and holding a peace convention in 1861. Their actions ended up sparking outrage that led to arrests, threats, and the creation of a local vigilance committee to silence opposition. Reverend Ellis B. Schnabel, one of the most vocal peace advocates, was arrested for disloyalty. Even though the movement was short-lived it did stir debate about free speech and loyalty during wartime.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-peace-movement-in-litchfield/>

Tags: #civilwar #socialreform #government #law

Chinese, Southeast Asians, and Hawaiians in the American Civil War

During the American Civil War, men from China, Southeast Asia, and Hawaii served in the Union military. They often enlisted under Anglicized names to avoid racial discrimination. Some of these men, including Joseph Pierce, lived in Connecticut. Though the number of these men may seem small, their service highlights the overlooked diversity within the Union ranks. Their contributions challenge the common perception of who fought in the war and remind us that people of many backgrounds helped shape American history.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/they-also-served-chinese-southeast-asians-and-hawaiians-in-the-american-civil-war/>, <https://newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/joseph-pierce-the-civil-war-service-of-a-connecticut-chinese/>

Tags: #civilwar #law #labor

Rise of Industrial America (1878-1900)

Connecticut's Contributions to Flight

Many innovations in flight are associated with Connecticut. Inventor Charles Ritchel built and sponsored the first controlled flight of a dirigible in America in Hartford in 1878. 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

Tags: #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 originally made corsets in Bridgeport. Doctors Ira De Ver and Lucien Warner noticed corsets' negative effects on their patients and began to design more flexible garments. This change in design influenced the corset industry and led to greater experimentation with types of material. The company purchased Mary Phelps Jacob's patent for the modern bra in the 1910s, producing the first garments and inventing cup sizing.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/from-bombs-to-bras-world-war-i-conservation-measures-transform-the-lives-of-women>

Further resources: Bridgeport History Center; Lucien Warner's published memoirs

[tps://archive.org/details/personalmemoirso00warnuoft](https://archive.org/details/personalmemoirso00warnuoft), Bedford Whaling Museum:

<https://www.cshwhalingmuseum.org/blog/a-woman-has-an-awful-lot-to-thank-a-whale-for>

Tags: #womenshistory #innovation

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.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-first-commercial-telephone-exchange-today-in-history>, <https://lib.uconn.edu/location/asc/about/25-for-25-celebrating-twenty-five-years-of-collecting/the-worlds-first-telephone-directory>

Further resources: Archives & Special Collections, UConn Library.

Tags: #discovery #technology

Pope's Electric Vehicles and Transportation Innovations

Albert Augustus Pope innovated with bicycles and automobiles through mechanization and interchangeable parts, 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: #innovation #technology

Frederick Law Olmsted - A Pioneering Landscape Architect

Hartford native, Frederick Law Olmsted, is often described as the founder of landscape architecture in the U.S. As the designer of New York City's Central Park, Olmsted had many commissions in Connecticut, including New Britain's Walnut Park, Bridgeport's Beardsley Park, and the grounds of what is now the Institute of Living in Hartford. Olmsted was also a social reformer who advocated for the rights of the mentally ill.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/people/frederick-law-olmsted>

Tags: #art #preservation

The Ivory Industry in Deep River and Essex

During the Industrial Revolution, pianos grew in popularity, as the instrument became more affordable to the general public. As a result, companies that produced combs out of ivory began producing piano keys and other parts. The mergers of several small comb businesses and an influx of capital produced two large manufacturing plants in Deep River and Essex. These two plants processed 90% of all ivory entering the U.S. and employed 1,400 people at their peak. While this provided many economic benefits locally, such intensive manufacturing spurred the destruction of elephants and sustained the practice of slavery in Africa.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/ivory-cutting-the-rise-and-decline-of-a-connecticut-industry/>

Tags: #commerce #technology #slavery

Overland Travel in Connecticut, from Footpaths to Interstates

Connecticut's travel routes began as Native American footpaths, which early colonists expanded into roads for communication and trade. These paths became essential post roads, like the Boston Post Road, and were later developed into turnpikes and railways. In the 20th century, highways and interstates transformed transportation across the state. This evolution reflects how travel needs and infrastructure have changed over time.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/overland-travel-in-connecticut-from-footpaths-to-interstates/>

Tags: #travel #innovation #indigenouspeoples #commerce #technology

The Deplorable History of Hartford's Seyms Street Jail

Hartford's Seyms Street Jail, opened in 1873, quickly gained a negative reputation. This was due to overcrowding, poor sanitation, and cruel punishment methods. Due to this, there was a major protest by inmates in 1967. However, despite multiple investigations and public criticism, conditions remained poor. Eventually, the jail was closed in 1977. It was demolished and replaced by Lozada Park in 1979.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-deplorable-history-of-hartfords-seyms-street-jail/>

Tags: #law #government #socialreform

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.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/seaside-tuberculosis-sanatorium-waterfords-contested-oceanfront-gem/>

Tags: #medicine

Mary Townsend Seymour

In early 20th- century Hartford, Mary Townsend Seymour fought for civil rights and 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.

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

Tags: #socialreform #womenshistory

Anna Louise James--Pioneer in the Pharmacy Field

Anna Louise James was the first female pharmacist in the state of Connecticut. James grew up in Old Saybrook and in 1908 became the first African American woman 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, she took over operation of the pharmacy, renamed it James Pharmacy, and worked there until her retirement in 1967.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/anna-louise-james-makes-history-with-medicine>

Further resources: Old Saybrook Historical Society

Tags: #womenshistory #blackhistory #medicine

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

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 the 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

The 4-H Clubs of Connecticut originated in 1913 with the establishment of the first club in Mansfield. A part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension System, 4-H Clubs of Connecticut continue to strive to give its members important life skills and build character.

Learn more: https://archivesearch.lib.uconn.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/206479

Tags: #socialreform #agriculture #education #labor #nature

Hiram Bingham III: Machu Picchu Explorer and Politician

Hiram Bingham III was a distinguished scholar and public servant from Salem, Connecticut. After completing his PhD at Harvard University, he became an adjunct professor at Yale University in 1907. 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

Hartford Newsies Strike Back

In 1909, Hartford newspaper owners cut newsboys' pay by refusing to reimburse them for unsold papers. In response, the newsboys organized a strike to demand fair treatment. Lasting 19 days, the strike brought attention to child labor issues.

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

Tags: #labor #socialreform #journalism

Sophie Tucker - from Vaudeville to Film

Brash, bold and her own woman, Hartford's Sophie Tucker enjoyed a long and successful career as an entertainer, performing for almost 60 years. Her legendary career encompassed vaudeville, radio, Broadway, film and television. Nicknamed "the Last of the Red-hot Mamas," she was an inspiration to both the entertainment and the Jewish communities, maintaining her faith throughout her life and donating money to various charities, including the Jewish War Relief Campaign.

Learn More: <https://connecticuthistory.org/sophie-tucker-the-last-of-the-red-hot-mamas/>

Further resources: "Finding Aid to the Sophie Tucker Collection." 2017. *Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford*. <http://archivedata.jhsg.org/template/findingaid.php-src=sophietucker.xml.html> (January 29, 2014),

<https://archive.org/details/someofthesedaysa0000soph/page/4/mode/2up> (Autobiography)

Tags: #women #jewish #entertainment

Hartford's Anna Sokolow, Modern Dance Pioneer

Anna Sokolow was born in Hartford in 1910. She was a modern dancer and choreographer who used dance to speak out against social issues. Her work focused on topics like war, poverty, and injustice. She started her career with Martha Graham and later formed her own dance company. Sokolow believed dance could be a tool for change.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/hartfords-anna-sokolow-modern-dance-pioneer/>

Tags: #art #socialreform #entertainment

Hartford's Challenge to "The Birth of a Nation"

In 1915, *The Birth of a Nation* premiered in Hartford, Connecticut. It drew in large white audiences despite its racist portrayal of African Americans and glorification of the Ku Klux Klan. The film quickly faced backlash from local religious and civic leaders due to its content. They were concerned about its harmful social impact. Reverends Walter Gay and Richard R. Ball led efforts to petition Mayor Joseph Lawler to stop the film's screenings. They argued it was unjust to African Americans and could incite racial tension. Hartford's protest became one of the earliest organized civic responses to the controversial film.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/birth-of-a-nation/>

Tags: #blackhistory #socialreform #entertainment #worldwar1

Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Southbury Says “No” to Nazis - A Small Connecticut Town Reacts To The German-American Bund

The tiny town of Southbury, CT stands up to Nazi sympathizers who want to start a Nazi training camp there in 1937. Their reaction was decisive and creative.

Learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04KXvT40yIE> a documentary
<https://www.southbury-ct.org/1937>

Tags: #jewish #worldwar2

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.

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

Tags: #worldwar2 #military #socialreform #law

Cantwell v. Connecticut: Reforming Out-of-Doors Speech Rights

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 the 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

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. Over 2,000 laborers worked on the project.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-merritt-parkway/>

Tags: #labor #preservation #travel

WWII: Women in the Workplace

Connecticut business boomed during WWII, with companies like Electric Boat, Pratt & Whitney, and Hamilton Propellers fulfilling huge defense orders for the federal government. With so many men away fighting in the war, women entered factories to take their places. Women also joined the military and worked many jobs, including as pilots for non-combat missions. Women proved they were capable of doing what was considered “men’s work” at the time.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/women-and-defense-world-war-ii-on-the-connecticut-home-front/>

Further resources: <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/wwii-women.html>

<https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/HistoryDayPreviousTopics/women>

Tags: #womenshistory #worldwar2 #labor #military

The Wobblies: The Fight for 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: <https://connecticuthistory.org/how-the-wobblies-won-free-speech/>

Tags: #labor #law

The Hartford Circus Fire

In a field on Barbour Street in Hartford, between six- and eight-thousand patrons sought distraction from the summer heat by attending a performance of the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus. A fire started and rapidly spread once in contact with the tent canvas, due largely to the canvas’ waterproofing using paraffin wax thinned with gasoline. By the time firefighters put out the flames, nearly 170 people lay dead. Most died from exposure to the fire and smoke, but a significant number were also trampled. This tragedy prompted Connecticut lawmakers to enact strict fire regulations for public performances.

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

Tags: #law #entertainment

Chick Austin and the Wadsworth Atheneum - Revolution in the Art World

Chick Austin was a visionary director of the Wadsworth Atheneum from 1927-1944. He championed living artists in art, theater and design. Under his leadership, the Atheneum hosted the first retrospective of Pablo Picasso's work. He also curated the first exhibition, The Newer Super-Realism, that exhibited the work of Surrealist artists together. A specialist in Renaissance and Baroque art, Austin acquired several notable artwork from that period.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/chick-austin-modernizes-a-connecticut-institution-2/>

Tags: #art

Photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White

Margaret Bourke-White was a pioneering photojournalist as well as the first female photographer at *Life* magazine. She captured iconic images of the Great Depression and of the destruction caused by the Dust Bowl. Bourke-White also brought powerful World War II moments to light, from North Africa and Italy fighting against one another, to the horrors of the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. After retirement, she spent her last years in Darien, Connecticut.

Learn more:

<https://connecticuthistory.org/photojournalist-margaret-bourke-white-no-picture-was-unimportant-to-her/>, <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/margaret-bourkewhite>

Tags: #journalism #worldwar2 #womenshistory

The Great Depression and the Buffet Server

During the Great Depression, Connecticut's Chase Brass & Copper Company in Waterbury faced the challenge of maintaining production despite plummeting consumer demand. To adapt, the company created affordable and stylish household items. One of these items was the innovative buffet server, which was designed by Lurette Guild. It was a new type of food container that gained popularity as families simplified their meals and gatherings. The buffet server remains a symbol of how necessity during the Depression sparked lasting changes in domestic life.

Learn more:

<https://museumofcthistory.org/the-depression-gave-us-the-buffet-server/>

Tags: #innovation #technology #commerce

Marian Anderson

Marian Anderson, a world-renowned African American contralto, faced racism throughout her career but broke racial barriers in the arts. After being denied a performance at Constitution Hall, she gave a historic concert at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939. She later moved to Danbury, Connecticut, where she became a beloved figure and continued her activism. Anderson's studio was donated to the Danbury Museum and Historical Society in 1993.

Learn more:

<https://connecticuthistory.org/black-history-month-marian-anderson/>,
<https://ctfreedomtrail.org/connecticut-freedom-trail-sites/marian-anderson-studio/>,
<https://danburymuseum.org/marian-anderson-studio>

Tags: #blackhistory #womenshistory #entertainment #art #preservation

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 an important precedent because it was the first 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 #womenshistory

LGBTQ+ Activist 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 and 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 #LGBTQ+history

Maurice Sendak: 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 #jewish

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 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

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 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

The Battle for Cockenoe Island: Reforming Eminent Domain

A Native American known as Cockenoe or Checkanoe, signed a deed in the mid-17th century giving an island to the fledgling town of Norwalk. Just over 180 years later, Cockenoe Island became part of Westport, when that municipality emerged from parts of Norwalk, Fairfield, and Weston. The Bridgeport-based power company United Illuminating (UI) acquired the island in the 1960s and 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 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. 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/>

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

Clare Boothe Luce Changed Perceptions about Women in Business and Politics

Clare Boothe Luce won election to the United States Congress in 1942. She was the first woman to represent Connecticut in the U.S. House of Representatives. 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 U.S. Ambassador to Italy—the first woman to hold such an appointment to a major European country.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/clare-boothe-luce/>

Tags: #law #art #socialreform #womenshistory #travel #government

The U.S.S. Nautilus

Built in Groton in the 1950s as the first atomic powered submarine, the U.S.S. Nautilus 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 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 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 woman 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 #blackhistory

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.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/americas-first-woman-governor-ella-grasso-1919-1981/>

Tags: #womenshistory #government

Alan L. Hart: Pioneer in Medicine and Transgender History

Alan L. Hart was a physician who improved tuberculosis care by using X-rays to detect the disease early on and led health programs in Connecticut. In 1917, he became one of the first Americans to have gender-affirming surgery and lived as a man. Despite facing discrimination, he made important contributions to medicine and transgender history.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/alan-l-hart-pioneer-in-medicine-and-transgender-history/>

Tags: #medicine #LGBTQ+history #socialreform #health

Dr. Benjamin Spock leads not one but two revolutions!

Born in New Haven in 1903, Dr. Spock went to Yale and became a pediatrician specializing in babies. He wrote *The Common Sense Book Of Baby And Child Care* in 1946, which described new ways for parents to look at and implement best practices in child rearing that openly defied the conventional wisdom of the late 19th-early 20th centuries. This book led to further changes that re-sculpted the American cultural landscape by the 1960s - which saw Dr. Spock evolve into a leader of the anti-war and anti-nuclear movements of the late 20th century.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/benjamin-spock-raising-the-worlds-children/>, <https://archive.org/details/b32732570> (First Edition of *Baby and Child Care*)

Further resources:

<https://archive.org/details/infantcare00westgoog/page/n40/mode/1up> (US Childrens Bureau Pamphlet "Infant Care", 1921) - notably "A few minutes of gentle play now and then will not harm a normal baby",

<https://archive.org/details/carefeedingo00holt/page/n9/mode/2up> (bestseller from 1917) *The Care And Feeding of Children, advocating rigorous schedules and eliminating "bad habits"*,

<https://archive.org/details/spockbenjaminm.hq25564288/page/n183/mode/2up> (Dr. Spock's official FBI file)

Tags: #health #education

William F. Buckley Jr. - Revolutionary or Reactionary?

A resident of Connecticut from the age of 7 in 1933, William F. Buckley Jr. grew into a leader of the new conservative movement in the late 1950s. One of the most influential builders and proponents of what would come to be called the New Right, in 1951 he wrote *God And Man At Yale: The Superstitions of Academic Freedom*, calling the university "a hotbed of atheism and collectivism". This book pushed him to the forefront of American conservative thought. Said the New York Times: "His greatest achievement was making conservatism - not just electoral Republicanism, but conservatism as a system of ideas - respectable in liberal post-World War II America." Was Buckley a revolutionary thinker who fundamentally changed America's political landscape in the late 20th century, contributing to the conservative movement we see today, or was he reacting to the changes brought on by left-leaning student movements of the 1950s and early 1960s?

Learn

more:

<https://www.google.com/books/edition/Buckley/IRECEQAAQBAI?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA4&printsec=frontcover> (biography),

<https://archive.org/details/godmanatvale0000unse/page/n3/mode/2up> (primary source)

Tags: #education #law

A Godmother to Ravensbrück Survivors

Caroline Ferriday was a Connecticut philanthropist who supported Polish women imprisoned at the Ravensbrück concentration camp during World War II. Known as the "Rabbits," these young women who were high school and university students, were subjected to painful medical experiments by the Nazis. Ferriday helped raise awareness of the suffering that they had to endure and arranged for many of them to come to the U.S. for medical treatment. Her efforts offered healing and recognition to survivors involved.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/a-godmother-to-ravensbruck-survivors/>
Tags: #womenshistory #worldwar2 #health #socialreform

Contemporary United States (1969-present)

The Black Panther Trials in Connecticut

The Black Panther Party organized to end the oppression of black people in the U.S. The first chapter in CT was founded in Bridgeport by José Rene Gonzalves of California. 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. In 1969 in New Haven, Black Panther Alex Rackley was tortured and killed by other Black Panther members because they believed he was an FBI informant. The resulting investigation swept up Black Panther leaders Ericka Huggins and Bobby Seale who were in New Haven at the time of Rackley's murder and were accused of ordering his death. Their criminal trial spurred large protests in New Haven and drew nationwide media attention. While the people who killed Rackley were sentenced to prison, the jury deadlocked on whether Huggins and Seale were guilty. Instead of going to a retrial, the judge dropped all charges against the two.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/free-bobby-free-ericka-the-new-haven-black-panther-trials/>, <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-rise-of-the-black-panther-party-in-connecticut/>

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

Maria Sanchez: La Madrina and Advocate for the Puerto Rican Community

Maria Sanchez played a pivotal role in improving the quality of life for Puerto Ricans in Hartford. Her newsstand served as a community gathering spot during the 1950s and 1960s, where immigrants discussed concerns about their treatment and lack of economic opportunities. In 1965, she helped found the Puerto Rican Democrats of Hartford. In the 1970s, she worked to establish bilingual education in city schools. In 1988, Sanchez became the first Latina elected as a CT State Representative. She may be best known for her role in opening communications between community members, police, and the City Council during the Comanchero riots in 1969.

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

Tags: #latinahistory #latinxhistory #womenshistory #education

Norman Lear and People For The American Way

Legendary television producer and Jewish Connecticut native Norman Lear is responsible for the groundbreaking sitcoms All In The Family and One Day At A Time, which fundamentally changed American television. Lear also created the liberal advocacy group People For The American Way in 1980, in reaction to the influence of the conservative Moral Majority advocacy group on American politics.

Learn More: <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/quinnipiac-professor-discusses-the-impact-of-norman-lear/3166016/>

Tags: #socialreform #jewish #entertainment #government

Gay Rights Bill of 1975

Betty Hudson, a freshman state senator from Madison, introduced a gay rights bill in 1975. The bill cleared the Senate, but not the House. The bill finally passed the legislature in 1991 and was signed into law. It bans discrimination against gays and lesbians in housing, employment, public accommodations. Sen. Hudson began her career as a selectman in Madison before being elected Connecticut State Senator of the 33rd District. She became Governor Grasso's advisor on Human Affairs, State Director of Welfare Offices and a member of the state's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

Learn more: <http://www.courant.com/courant-250/moments-in-history/hc-250-gay-rights-where-we-are-now-20140628-story.html>

Tags: #LGBTQ+history #law

Murder of Richard Reihl - Reform and "Reformers"

The 1988 murder of Richard Reihl, a gay man from Wethersfield, galvanized and mobilized activities in Connecticut to advocate for LGBTQ+ civil rights. Two teenagers associated with the "Reformers", a group that targeted gay men, followed Reihl to his home where they brutally murdered him. Following Reihl's death, protests, vigils and rallies took place throughout the state. The reaction to Richard Reihl's murder helped galvanize support for the 1991 Gay Rights Bill.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/richard-reihl-the-hate-crime-that-became-a-turning-point-for-lgbtq-civil-rights/>

Further resources: Connecticut Museum of Culture and History's LGBTQ Timeline <https://www.connecticutmuseum.org/lgbqtimeline/> and the GLBTQ Archives at Central Connecticut State University

Tags: #LGBTQ+history #law

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 #latinohistory #latinahistory #latinxhistory #law

Mohegan Tribe Receives Federal Recognition

On March 6, 1994, the Mohegan people received recognition as a tribe from the U.S. government, a complicated process that took sixteen years to complete. This recognition meant that the Mohegans could reach an agreement with the State of Connecticut to pursue economic development to support their own people. They chose to build a destination resort and casino (Mohegan Sun) that provided jobs for tribal members. Federal recognition also meant that they could create their own constitution and system of self-government.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/mohegan-federal-recognition/>

Further resources: <https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/museum>

Tags: #indigenouspeoples #government #law

Federal and State Recognition of Native American tribes

Currently, two tribes (Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot) are federally recognized, with an additional three (Schaghticoke, Paucatuck Eastern Pequot and Golden Hill Paugussett) recognized by the CT. Why is it so difficult to receive official recognition? Are there other tribes trying to gain official recognition?

Learn more: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/PS94/rpt/olr/htm/94-R-0170.htm>,

Tags: #indigenouspeoples #government #law

Finders Not Keepers: The Repatriation Revolution

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. Riding a wave of new thought in museum studies, the university repatriated 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 in 2010.

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

Girls Can Play, Too!: Women's Basketball in Connecticut Represents a Revolution in Sports

Basketball was invented by Dr. James Naismith of Springfield, MA in the late 1800s as a sport for boys to promote physical fitness. While women had largely been excluded from sports, changing ideas on health and fitness and the growth of physical education classes in schools made sports more accessible to women at the turn of the 20th century. Basketball quickly became a popular women's sport in Connecticut and beyond. Later, the success of the UConn women's basketball team led to a broadcasting deal with a local station to show all their games, making women's basketball even more popular.

Learn more:

<http://ctexplored.org/girls-can-play-too-womens-basketball-in-connecticut/>

Tags: #womenshistory

Florence Wald, the Founder of Hospice Care in the U.S.

Yale nursing professor Florence Wald caused a major shift in how terminally ill patients were treated. In 1974, she founded The Connecticut Hospice in Branford, the first hospice facility in the U.S., which provided holistic and comprehensive care for patients and their family members. In her system, medical professionals worked with spiritual leaders, therapists, social workers, and bereavement specialists to provide the dying patient and their families with whatever they needed for end of life care.

Learn more: <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/florence-wald>

Tags: #health #medicine

The Muppet Revolution: Jim & Jane Henson's Impact on Early Childhood Learning

Together the Hensons created and performed the Muppets, which became popular guests on TV shows and in commercials during the 1960s. The Hensons were already well-known,

and living in Greenwich, when they were invited to contribute to a new educational television show designed for preschool age children called Sesame Street. Jim and Jane were very interested in how children learn from watching their own kids grow up, so they jumped at the opportunity. Jim created Big Bird, Grover, Bert & Ernie and other Muppets as characters that children could identify with. Sesame Street soon had a strong educational impact, especially on lower-income viewers, and became a cultural phenomenon that influenced children's media through the late 20th century and beyond.

Learn more: [jim and Jane Henson Create the Muppets and More - Connecticut Explored \(ctexplored.org\)](https://www.ctexplored.org/sample-article-jim-and-jane-henson-create-the-muppets-and-more-connecticut-explored/)

Tags: #education #entertainment

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

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

Hardcore Connecticut: Documenting the State's Punk Rock Scene

In the late 1970s and 1980s, Connecticut had a strong punk and hardcore music scene. This was mainly built around independence and youth rebellion. Young people used music, zines, and underground shows to push back against mainstream culture and authority. Today, the Joe Snow Punk Rock Collection at UConn helps preserve this powerful form of self-expression and resistance.

Learn more: [Hardcore Connecticut: Documenting the State's Punk Rock Scene - Connecticut History | a CTHumanities Project](https://connecticuthistory.org/hardcore-connecticut-documenting-the-state-s-punk-rock-scene-connecticut-history-a-cthumanities-project/)

Tags: #art #entertainment #socialreform #preservation

Alexander Calder and Making Art Political

Alexander Calder, famous for his kinetic sculptures, used his art to express political views during the 1960s and 1970s. He was someone who opposed the Vietnam War and President Nixon. He contributed artwork to support Senator George McGovern's presidential

campaign in 1972. Calder's campaign posters, such as "McGovern for McGovernment," featured designs that conveyed his political stance without depicting the candidate himself.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/alexander-calder-and-making-art-political/>

Tags: #art #socialreform #government #entertainment

Hartford's Les Payne, Trailblazing Journalist

Les Payne was born in Alabama, but raised in Hartford. He became a pioneering African American journalist known for his investigative reporting. At Newsday, he won a Pulitzer Prize for the 1974 "Heroin Trail" series that traced heroin from its source to U.S. streets. He also covered global issues like apartheid in South Africa. In 1975, Payne co-founded the National Association of Black Journalists. Throughout his career, he exposed racial injustices and challenged systemic inequality through his journalism.

Learn more: <https://connecticuthistory.org/hartfords-les-payne-trailblazing-journalist/>,
<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/payne-les-1941-2018/>

Tags: #journalism #blackhistory #government

Isabelle Kelley and the Food Stamp Revolution

Born in Ellington, lived in Simsbury, spearheaded early efforts for free or reduced priced school lunches, and wrote the Food Stamp Act of 1964 under President Lyndon B. Johnson. She was the first woman to lead a division of a federal agency. She continued to work to end hunger in America beyond her retirement from federal service in 1973. As we face changes to food security in the 21st century, what does Isabelle Kelley's work mean for us today?

Learn more: <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/isabelle-m-kelley>,

<https://wednesdaywomen.com/isabelle-kelley-the-economist-who-fed-america/>

Further resources: <https://hollisarchives.lib.harvard.edu/agents/people/17654> (interview as part of an oral history project on women in the federal government)

Tags: #socialreform, #government, #womenshistory,

Where the Wild Things Are: Maurice Sendak

Maurice Sendak, a longtime Connecticut resident, was a groundbreaking author and illustrator best known for *Where the Wild Things Are*. Born in Brooklyn in 1928 to Polish-Jewish immigrant parents, Sendak was deeply affected by childhood illness, World War II, and the Holocaust. These moments influenced the darker emotional tones of his work. In 1970, he moved to Ridgefield, Connecticut, where he lived and worked until his death in 2012. Sendak was known for challenging conventions in children's literature. He created stories that respected children's emotions and imaginations, using "weird" illustrations". Sendak's contributions to literature and illustration earned him many accolades, including the Caldecott Medal, National Medal of Arts, and a National Humanities Medal.

Learn more:

<https://connecticuthistory.org/where-the-wild-things-are-maurice-sendak/>

Tags: #art #entertainment #LGBTQ+history

The Mexican Community in Bridgeport

Starting in the 1980s, Bridgeport, Connecticut, saw a growing influx of Mexican immigrants, especially from the Puebla region. These newcomers settled in neighborhoods, building

tight-knit communities that centered around family, cultural traditions, and local businesses. This migration transformed Bridgeport into the New England city with the largest Mexican population, surpassing both Boston and New Haven. The community's growth is symbolized by businesses such as restaurants, bakeries, and grocery stores. These places reflect the vibrant culture and spirit that Mexican-Americans brought. This dynamic community redefined the cultural and demographic landscape of Bridgeport, contributing to the city's evolving identity and leaving a lasting impact on its history.

Learn more: <https://bportlibrary.org/hc/business-and-commerce/when-the-aztec-eagle-began-her-soar-over-bridgeport-part-1/>,
<https://bportlibrary.org/hc/business-and-commerce/when-the-aztec-eagle-began-to-soar-over-bridgeport-part-2-from-puebla-york-oaxakeepsie-and-mexchester-2/>,
<https://bportlibrary.org/hc/business-and-commerce/when-the-aztec-eagle-began-her-soar-over-bridgeport-part-3-men-of-maplewood/>

Tags: #latinxhistory #latinohistory #latinahistory #community