



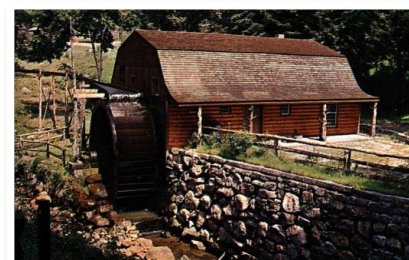
Connecticut Resources

Family History Sources in the Constitution State



Connecticut History

While the area that is now Connecticut was first explored and settled by the Dutch in the early 17th century, English settlers from Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colonies moved in soon after, establishing the Connecticut, New Haven, and Saybrook Colonies. In 1662, the colonies came together under a charter granted by King Charles II of England.



During the Dutch occupation of New Netherlands, New Englanders were crossing the Long Island Sound and settling on Long Island. At one point, the town of Southold on Long Island was part of the New Haven Colony.

Connecticut played a large role in the American Revolution supplying iron and weaponry to the extent that it was known as the "Arsenal of the Revolution."

Beginning in the 18th century, the whaling industry was important to many Connecticut ports, particularly New London, which at one time was the third largest whaling port in the U.S. The industry peaked in the 1840s and advances in whale hunting in the 1860s led to a rapid decline in the number of whales.

Inland, the nineteenth century saw a shift from an agrarian economy to a more industrial one. In addition to iron works in Salisbury, the textile industry was growing throughout New England, and gun manufacturers like Samuel Colt, Smith & Wesson, and Winchester, at times had factories in Connecticut.

While Connecticut is the third smallest state in size, it ranks fourth highest in population density.

Connecticut Censuses

Federal censuses for the state of Connecticut began in 1790. A [Connecticut Census Index, 1790-1830](#) is available at the Connecticut State Library.

Jay Mack Holbrook's *Connecticut 1670 Census* (Oxford, MA: Holbrook Research Institute, 1977), combines a number of sources (tax, land, church, freeman, probate) attempting to count the heads of household by name for the entire colony in the time period 1667–73. This is the most complete pre statehood enumeration available.

No state population censuses were taken for Connecticut, although a number of inventories and enumerations of population exist (with and without names). However, a special Military Census of 1917 listed all males between at least twenty to thirty years of age, although most towns reported those ages sixteen through sixty. The data includes name, age, birth and number of dependents, ability to perform certain tasks, and occupation.



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Significant Dates (through 1960)

1633—Trading post was set up at Windsor by members of Plymouth Colony.

1634—Wethersfield was settled by a small group of settlers from Watertown, Massachusetts.

1634—The English settled at Windsor.

1635—Saybrook Colony was established by members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

1636—Hartford was established by Puritans led by the Rev. Thomas Hooker.

1637—The Pequot War was fought between the Pequot tribe and English colonists, along with their Native American allies, the Mohegans and Narragansetts. The Pequot lost the war, and survivors were captured and enslaved.

1638—New Haven Colony was settled by Puritans. It included the current towns of New Haven, Branford, Guilford, Milford, and Stamford, as well as Southold on Long Island.

1639—The colony adopted the Fundamental Orders, which set up a representative government.

1662—King Charles II grants a charter for the colony of Connecticut,

1675—A last attempt by Native Americans to drive out the English in southern New England fails in King Philip's War.

1687—The Charter Oak incident takes place as Sir Edmund Andros demands the return of the 1662 charter. Legend has it the charter was hidden in the "Charter Oak Tree" and the tree became an iconic state symbol.

1689—William and Mary confirm the 1662 original charter.

1701—Yale was established as Collegiate School. (Renamed Yale College in 1718.)

1731—A deposit of iron was discovered at Salisbury. Forges began appearing shortly afterward and in 1762 a blast furnace opened in Salisbury, which produced most of the cannon for the American Revolution, earning Connecticut the nickname "Arsenal of the Revolution."

1765—Passage of the Stamp Act led to protests in Connecticut and the Sons of Liberty unseat the Connecticut governor who had signed an oath in favor of the act.

1769-1799—Pennamite-Yankee War was a series of skirmishes over land along the northern branch of the Susquehanna River in what is now Pennsylvania. King Charles II of England had granted charters to that land to both Connecticut and William Penn. In 1799, The Connecticut settlers became Pennsylvanians.

1774—A law is passed banning the importation of slaves to Connecticut.

1775—Connecticut forces secure the arsenal at Fort Ticonderoga, recently captured from the British.

1775-1883—Connecticut provided food, arms, and other provisions to the Continental Army. There were British raids on the Connecticut towns of Danbury (1777), New Haven, Fairfield, Norwalk (1779), New London and Groton (1781-led by Connecticut native, Benedict Arnold).

1776—Connecticut residents are largely in favor of the Declaration of Independence.

Population

1790	237,946
1800	251,002
1810	261,942
1820	275,248
1830	297,675
1840	309,978
1850	370,792
1860	460,147
1870	537,454
1880	622,700
1890	746,258
1900	908,420
1910	1,114,756
1920	1,380,631
1930	1,606,903
1940	1,709,242
1950	2,007,280
1960	2,535,234
1970	3,031,709
1980	3,107,576



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1784—An act was passed in Connecticut providing for gradual emancipation. Slaves born after March 1784 were to be emancipated at the age of twenty-five. In 1797, the age is reduced to 21.

1788—Connecticut becomes the 5th U.S. State to ratify the Constitution.

1792—The Mohegan Road became the first of a series of turnpikes built in Connecticut built in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

1795—Connecticut's initial charter granted land in a strip that extended to the Pacific Ocean, but in addition to lands ceded in New York and more recently in Pennsylvania, much of that land was ceded to the U.S. following the Revolution in exchange for the state's debt. The exception was a strip of land in northern Ohio known as the Western Reserve. In 1795, that land was sold to the Connecticut Land Company for \$1.2 million.

1804—A dispute over the Massachusetts/Connecticut boundary is settled. The towns of Enfield, Somers, Suffolk, and Woodstock are now in Connecticut, but a 2 ½ mile area near Congamond Lake was partitioned off and given to Massachusetts, creating the notch at the bottom of Massachusetts that is known as the Southwick jog.

1812-1814—The War of 1812 was unpopular in Connecticut, but the state sent provisions, producing cannons and muskets from those growing industries.

1814—27 vessels, including privateers, are burned on the Connecticut River. It is the largest maritime loss of the war.

1818—The Constitution of 1818 reorganized the government and most notably disestablished the recognized state religion (Congregational).

1828—The Farmington Canal opens creating water travel route into interior Connecticut and Massachusetts.

1848—Samuel Colt received a patent for his revolving gun in 1836. Its popularity in the West and during the Mexican-American War allowed him to open a factory in Hartford in 1848, and build a larger factory and complex in 1855.

1848—Slavery was abolished in Connecticut.

1861-1865—Connecticut sent 55,000 men to fight in the Civil War and the state was instrumental in arming Union forces.

1863—The Hartford and Wethersfield Railroad is established with horse drawn cars. In 1888, electric cars were introduced and by 1894 all of the cars were converted. The Hartford Street Railway Company operated until 1941.

1864—A fire destroyed the Colt Armory. Samuel Colt had died several years prior, but his wife rebuilt it in 1867. At the time, it employed 900 workers.

1872—Naval Yard opened on the Thames River in Groton.

1878—The first commercial telephone exchanged opened in New Haven.

1917—Connecticut supplied the World War I effort with roughly 67,000 soldiers, ammunition, textiles, and other supplies. The demand for products drew African-Americans from the South to meet workforce needs.

1927-48—In 1927, the Metropolitan District Commission, seeking to bolster the water supply of Hartford, began buying up land in the East Branch Valle of the Farmington River to create the Barkhamsted Reservoir. By the time waters began flowing in 1944, 1,000 people of that valley had been displaced.

1936—Severe flooding in Connecticut due to heavy rains and melting snow and ice. Ice floes and flooding took out bridges and a dam burst at New Hartford. More than 14,000 people were displaced.

1938—The New England Hurricane of 1938 made landfall at Long Island on September 21. The category 3 storm wreaked havoc on Connecticut, leaving many of the coastal towns in ruins and hundreds dead.

1944—A fire at an afternoon showing of the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus in Hartford killed 168 people and injured an estimated 650.

1955—Two hurricanes moved through Connecticut in August causing devastating flooding.



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Connecticut Vital Records

Marriages were recorded in Connecticut as early as 1640. In fact registration of births, marriages, and deaths had become the town clerk's responsibility by 1650. Following the Revolution to the mid-nineteenth century, the recording is not as thorough, but by 1870 when the State Board of Health was established, recording in all towns improved. To the present, recording of vital events is the town clerk's responsibility.

- [Connecticut Department of Public Health](#): Holds records of births, marriages, civil unions, and deaths from 01 July 1897. For earlier records, contact the Clerk of the town where the event occurred. Records may also be requested from the Clerk of the town where the event occurred. For more information on ordering, see the Vital Records page.
- [Connecticut State Library – Vital Records page](#): The Library holds the Barbour Index and copies of many microfilmed vital records to about 1900.

Connecticut Vital Records on Ancestry.com

- [Connecticut Town Birth Records, pre-1870 \(Barbour Collection\)](#)
- [Connecticut, Town Marriage Records, pre-1870 \(Barbour Collection\)](#)
- [Connecticut, Marriage Index, 1959-2001](#)
- [Connecticut, Deaths and Burials Index, 1650-1934](#)
- [Connecticut Death Index, 1949-2001](#)
- [Connecticut, Hale Cemetery Inscriptions and Newspaper Notices, 1629-1934](#)
- [Web: Connecticut, Find A Grave Index, 1636-2013](#)

[View All Connecticut Vital Records on Ancestry.com](#)

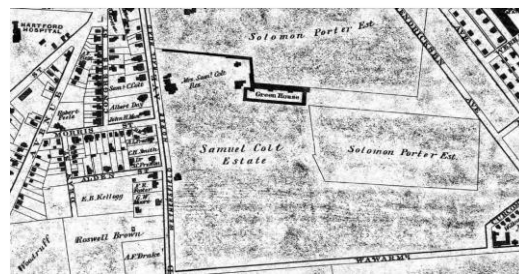
Special Collections on Ancestry.com

City Directories

Use the browse box in the upper right corner to determine what directories are available for your ancestor's area. If they lived in a rural area, check to see if that area was included with a larger city in the vicinity.

U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918

Searchable by name or browsable by location, in rural areas these maps give the names of people living in a particular area. For larger cities, there will be numbered lots and there may be names for some larger property owners.





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Other Collections

- [Connecticut, Church Record Abstracts, 1630-1920](#)
- [Connecticut, School Age Certificates, 1904-1911](#)
- [New England, The Great Migration and The Great Migration Begins, 1620-1635](#)
- [The New England Historical & Genealogical Register, 1847-2011](#)
- [Connecticut, Passport and Birth Certificates, 1852-1928](#)
- [Connecticut Soldiers, French and Indian War, 1755-62](#)
- [Connecticut, Military Census, 1917](#)
- [Connecticut, Military Questionnaires, 1919-1920](#)

[View All Connecticut Collections on Ancestry.com](#)

Other State resources

- [Connecticut State Library – History and Genealogy page](#): The state library has been the state archive since 1909. This page describes the library's extensive collection of genealogy resources, and provides a list of resource links and finding aids.
- [Connecticut Historical Society](#): Founded in 1825, CHS is home to a museum and library with manuscripts, photographs, prints, books, maps, and historical documents.
- [Museum of Connecticut History](#): At the Connecticut State Library, collections focus on Connecticut's government, military and industrial history.
- [Connecticut History Online](#). Photographs, drawings, and prints relating to Connecticut history.
- [ConnecticutHistory.org](#). Project of Connecticut Humanities
- [Center for Connecticut Studies at Eastern Connecticut State University](#): Holds a variety of historical documents and records with a focus on Tolland, New London, and Windham counties.
- [Connecticut Society of Genealogists \(CSG\)](#): Includes an index search of CSG databases, historical records, photographs, and the digitized archives of the Society's quarterly bulletin *The Connecticut Nutmegger*.
- [National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\) at Boston](#): This NARA facility maintains records from Federal agencies and courts in Connecticut, including census, military, court, naturalization, and immigration records.
- [New England Historic Genealogical Society](#): NEHGS holds a wide range of records on New England states, including Connecticut.
- [Godfrey Memorial Library](#): Located in Middletown, Godfrey Library holds an extensive collection of U.S. and international genealogy research materials. The Library is the creator of the American Genealogical and Biographical Index (AGBI).

