

CONNECTICUT

HISTORY

Connecticut is small, but its story is long. Native nations, Dutch traders and English settlers all wanted the land along its great river.

The First Peoples

People have lived in Connecticut for more than 10,000 years. By the 1600s, the Pequot, the Mohegan, the Quinnipiac and the Paugussett were among the nations living here. They grew corn, beans and squash, fished the rivers and gathered shellfish on the shore. They made **wampum**, beads cut from shells, for gifts and trade. The name Connecticut comes from an Algonquian word that means beside the long tidal river.

Traders and Settlers

A Dutch sea captain, Adriaen Block, sailed up the Connecticut River in 1614. In 1633 the Dutch built a trading post where Hartford stands today. They traded for beaver furs. English settlers soon followed from Massachusetts for farmland. In 1636 a minister named Thomas Hooker led about 100 people on foot to Hartford. The English towns joined together as a **colony**.

The Pequot War

The Pequot were the strongest nation in the region. They controlled much of the trade in furs and wampum. The Pequot and the English quarreled over trade and land, and each side killed men of the other. In April 1637, Pequot warriors attacked Wethersfield and killed nine settlers. In May, English soldiers and their Mohegan and Narragansett allies burned the Pequot fort at Mystic, and several hundred Pequot

died. The English and their allies won the war. In the **Treaty** of Hartford in 1638, the surviving Pequot were divided among the Mohegan and Narragansett, and their land went to the colony.

A Colony With a Charter

In 1662 King Charles II gave Connecticut a **charter**. It let the colonists choose their own leaders. Enslaved Africans and Native people worked on farms, in homes and on ships. A 1784 law began to end slavery slowly, and it ended in Connecticut in 1848.

Revolution and Statehood

In the Revolution, Connecticut farms sent so much food to George Washington's army that it was called the Provision State. Nathan Hale, a young teacher from Coventry, was caught spying on the British and hanged in 1776. In 1781 British troops burned New London. On January 9, 1788, Connecticut became the fifth state.



Building Connecticut

Fast streams turned water wheels, and Connecticut filled with workshops. Eli Whitney built a gun factory near New Haven in 1798. Workers came from Ireland, Italy, Poland and Canada to run the mills. In 1939 Igor Sikorsky flew his helicopter in Stratford. Native people live in Connecticut today, and the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan nations have their governments here.

CONNECTICUT THROUGH TIME

1614	1636	1637	1662	1701	1788	1848	1875	1939
Adriaen Block sails up the river	Thomas Hooker settles Hartford	The Pequot War	The king grants a charter	Yale is founded	Connecticut becomes the 5th state	Slavery ends in Connecticut	Hartford becomes the only capital	Sikorsky flies his helicopter

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Uncas	Mohegan leader. An ally of the English in the Pequot War.
Thomas Hooker	Minister who led settlers to Hartford in 1636.
Nathan Hale	Teacher and spy for Washington. The state hero.
Noah Webster	Born in West Hartford. Wrote a famous dictionary.
Harriet Beecher Stowe	Born in Litchfield. Wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin.

WORDS TO KNOW

wampum	beads cut from shells, used for gifts and trade
colony	a settlement ruled by a faraway country
treaty	a written agreement between nations
charter	a paper from a king that gives rights to a colony