



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1980 Volume cthistory: Changing Connecticut, 1634 - 1980

Introduction

The thirteen units contained in this volume were prepared by thirteen secondary school teachers from all over Connecticut during a five-week heat wave in July and August, 1980. The only initial unifying concern was that each author set out to develop a teaching project that focused on Connecticut history. All thirteen members of the Yale Institute on Connecticut History were convinced that the history of the state where their students lived, was worthy of study both for its own sake, and for the illumination such a study would provide for understanding larger issues of national and world significance. Additionally, there was a manifest belief that local materials serve an excellent pedagogical purpose in awakening interest in history and creating in students a concern with their physical and social environment.

Each seminar Fellow arrived at Yale with an idea for a project which he or she refined during the first few days of July. It turned out that the projects fell into three or four clearly demarcated areas: public law and government; 19th century economic development; and ethnic studies. Two or three of the projects lie across or between these three areas, but fit comfortably alongside them. All the Units deal with history change overtime as the years since 1634, have passed over Connecticut's forests, fields, and cities.

Unit I is an overview of the development of Connecticut government from the establishment of the Fundamental Orders in 1639 to the Constitution of 1818. The author's effort is to elucidate the role of law in shaping society as that society changed from a homogeneous one to a pluralistic one. Units II, III, IV, and V, each focus on one of the elements treated in Unit I; II, deals with the Fundamental Orders as an expression of Constitutionalism; III, treats the Baptist effort to achieve religious equality as illustrative of unfolding pluralism; IV, employs Connecticut's response to British colonial policy in the 1770's as a case study in anti-imperialism; and V, uses the rise of political parties in Connecticut to shed light on the development, nature, and rationale of the American two-party system.

Unit VI depicts colonial Connecticut as a frontier society in an effort to illustrate and illuminate the American frontier experience through the analytical device of Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis.

Units VII-X deal with aspects of Connecticut's economic development during the 19th century, with emphasis on the antebellum period. The units on the maritime, local commercial, and early mill development in central Fairfield County, have a high degree of integration and can be viewed as a whole. The study of New Britain provides a widely applicable model for Connecticut's numerous late 19th century small industrial cities.

Units XI and XII make a complementary pair of studies on Connecticut's ethnic history. Unit XI provides an overview of American immigration history and a conceptual framework for teaching about Connecticut's disparate ethnic groups. Unit XII presents a model using the New Haven Italian experience as a case study.

The final unit in this volume, based on materials collected in the course of a doctoral dissertation, is an attempt to organize the changes Connecticut has seen since World War II in order to make life in the state migration history and a conceptual framework for teaching about Connecticut's disparate ethnic groups. Unit XII presents a model using the New Haven Italian experience as a case study. The final unit in this volume, based on materials collected in the course of a doctoral dissertation, is an attempt to organize the changes Connecticut has seen since World War II in order to make life in the state comprehensible to high school students in the 1980's.

Each Unit consists of an introductory statement; a long substantive section; in most cases citations; a bibliography, usually annotated; a short discussion of teaching strategies; three or more sample lessons; and a set of appendixes containing materials that support the narrative or provide classroom activity sheets. The bibliographies are keyed for reading appropriateness:

- * junior high school
- ** senior high school
- *** popular treatment
- + scholarly, but readable
- ++ scholarly and difficult

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