



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1995 Volume V: The Geological Environment of Connecticut

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## **A Special Relationship: Connecticut and Its Settlers**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 95.05.07  
by Francis J. Degnan

One area of emphasis is the student's development of an understanding of what the Puritans considered important factors in establishing a new colony. The unit gives an historical sketch of the settlement of the coastline and Central Connecticut Valley communities. The theme developed is that these regions were settled first because of the unique physical environment each provided. The Hartford area's rich flood plain and river for commerce and transportation fit its settler's needs, much in the same way that the coastal harbors allow the New Haven Colony the chance to establish a trading empire.

These physical environments were the results of hundreds of millions of years of change. This is the second area of emphasis. The how and why of the geological changes of the past three hundred fifty million years that have resulted in the Connecticut we know today is presented. It is an active and fascinating geological history that we find when studying Connecticut. In New Haven we find rock of the lost continent of Avalonia that is some six hundred million years old. To the East and West of our city is four hundred year old sea bed of the Iapetus Ocean and in the middle of our city the two hundred million year old lava deposits of East and West Rocks. The unit includes lessons on rocks and minerals and a lesson on approaches to use in teaching the concept of time at these grade levels.

(Recommended for grade levels, 3,4, and 5)

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