The Jean Burr Smith Library

Researching Your Hometown

There are a number of print, electronic, and personal resources you can consult to find out more information about your hometown - or any town/city - within Connecticut or elsewhere. Here are a few ideas.

Starting point: Log on to http://my.commnet.edu – Library tab – click on 'Middlesex Community College' in the 'My Library Resources' channel. An electronic version of this guide is found under Quick Links - 'Help with Your Research'- 'Tip sheets'.

Books

Use the online catalog ('Find Books') and search by keyword - either the specific town's name or generally (Connecticut – town) as shown below:

FIND BOOKS

Quick Search for Books, DVDs, etc. in MxCC Library

| Connecticut town | Keyword ▼ | Search |

You will be searching for books within the MxCC library. To search libraries statewide, use the 'Request' catalog ('Find books in other libraries').

💡 If you find an item at another library, you can have it sent to the MxCC library (if it is not marked 'reference'). Search for the item in 'Request', select it, click on 'Request this item' located on the upper right or on the lower left. Fill in the form and click submit to finish.

In-Person

- Visit the town's public library. The reference librarians can guide you to the section on local history.
- Visit the clerk's office at the Town Hall. You can gather materials such as maps, annual and statistical reports, photos of popular area attractions and buildings, and other important information.
- Read the hometown newspaper to keep up-to-date on local news, politics, and other happenings to help create a profile of the current state of the community.
- Speak with long-time residents to gather their perspectives on town life, how it has changed over the years, the major issues in town (past and present), and their viewpoints. Personal interviews ("oral history") will add life and unique perspective to your research.

Articles

Look for newspaper articles using one of the newspaper databases accessed via the library's website ('Find Articles' – Newspapers). Search your town's name in N as shown below, or search for historical accounts in the Hartford Courant Historical database.

Websites

Visit the city's or town's website. For example, the website for Middletown provides information on the city's government structure, business environment, housing market, and recreation opportunities. In some cases, the city/town's website may provide information on education, an important component to consider. However, in Middletown's case, information on the school district is found on a separate website.

Other websites you can try:
- Connecticut Historical Society, a robust research site for historical information about Connecticut; also provides quick links to local historical societies.
- Connecticut History Online provides photographs, drawings, and prints about Connecticut's history. Search for your specific town here.
- Look up your town's demographic profile online at the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development website.
- Consult Connecticut Magazine's annual rating of the towns.
- Department of Labor's Market Information – search workforce information for your town/city.
- U.S. Census Bureau – dive into various demographic datasets segmented by town/city, county, and/or state. Or find a factsheet for your community through the American Factfinder.