

Danbury History Timeline

17th Century

- 1684 - Danbury is settled by eight Congregationalist families from Norwalk (Hoyt, Benedict, Gregory, Taylor, Beebee, Barnum, and Bushnell families)
- 1696 - First Congregationalist Church erected

• **18th Century**

- 1702 - Charter of town granted
- 1763 - First Episcopal Church edifice erected on South Street
- 1764 - Danbury's first "Publick School" is built on Wooster Street
- 1769 - The First Society in Danbury divides the Society for Schools into 9 districts: Beaver Brook, Great Plain, Pembroke, King Street, Boggs, Mill Plain, Mirey Brook, Starrs Plain or Long Ridge, and Stoney Hill Districts.
- 1777 - Danbury is occupied and burned by British troops during Revolutionary War on April 26
- 1780- Zadock Benedict starts a hat shop near site of present Post Office on Main Street
- 1788 - Elisha Whittlesdy of Danbury is a member of the state convention that ratifies the U.S. Constitution to make Connecticut the 5th state in the Union
- 1795 - The Danbury-Norwalk Turnpike is incorporated

• **19th Century**

- 1801 - The Great Flood and the Small pox epidemic
- 1810 - The comb-making industry is begun by Nathan Bishop
- 1821 - The Danbury Fair was started
- 1822 - The Borough of Danbury is formed
- 1829 - First fire companies are organized
- 1832 - P.T. Barnum imprisoned for libel in Danbury
- 1834 - First pipe water was introduced by the Danbury Water Company from Tweedy's springs
- 1836 - 134,000 hats manufactured yearly
- 1838 - First Catholic service held
- First regular grocery established by D.P. Nichols and L. S. Benedict
- 1846 - Town Street becomes known as Main Street
- 1847 - Homer Peters, African-American, establishes Danbury's first ice cream parlor
- 1852 - The Danbury and Norwalk Railroad opens
- 1853 - James S. Taylor invents machine for felting or sizing wool hats. Three hundred of these machines are sent all over the U.S.
- 1857 - Danbury Gas Light Company formed
- 1860 - One and a half million hats manufactured yearly in Danbury
- 1863 - George Edward Ives organizes a Brigade Band for the First Connecticut Heavy Artillery
- 1867 - New Street schoolhouse building completed at a cost of \$35,000

- Downtown fire prompts ban on wooden buildings
- 1868 - New York, Housatonic and Northern Railroad completed in Danbury
- 1869 - The Kohanza Dam breaks, killing 11 people and damaging \$100,000 worth of property
- 1870 - Taylor Opera House built
- 1871 - First daily paper (Daily News) established in Danbury
- 1872 - Sophia Penfield Connecticut's first female physician starts a practice in Danbury
- 1874 - First high school organized, classes held on the top floor of the New Street School
- 1875 - St. Peter Church dedicated
- 1879 - The Danbury Library opens on Main Street and Library Place
- Elmwood Park reopens as Fountain Park
- 1880 - Four and a half million hats manufactured yearly in Danbury.
- Danbury unionized long before the rest of the country
- 1881 - New England Railroad opens to Danbury
- 1882 - Hatter's strike
- 1883 - There are 141 telephones in the area
- The first issue of the Danbury Evening News is published
- 1884 - Danbury Hospital completed
- 1885 - The borough adopts the Schuyler electric light for street lighting
- The Danbury Fair's attendance exceeds that of any other fair in the state
- 1886 - City hall completed
- 1887 - First electric light is switched on in town
- 1888 - First street pavement laid
- A blizzard begins on March 11 and ends three days later resulting in 20 feet drifts
- 1889 - First fire streamer purchased
- Danbury granted city charter
- H. LeGrand Hopkins is elected as first mayor of new Danbury government
- 1890 - Five million hats manufactured yearly in Danbury
- Lock-out inaugurated, hat factories closed to the Trimmer's Union
- 1893 - The schools are closed and the factories are shut down so everyone can all go to the fair
- 1895 - there were 33 hat manufacturers in Danbury
- Judge George Wakeman Wheeler grants an injunction that orders the city to stop polluting the Still River
- The Woman's Edition of the Danbury Evening News, written, edited, assembled , and published by women, is printed
- Electric street railway formally opens
- 1899 - Ground-breaking ceremony for the present courthouse on Main Street is held

- **20th Century**
- 1902 - Beginning of hatters Union strike against D.E. Loewe Co.
- 1903 - New Union Station of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad opens on 'White Street
- Alexander M. White donates land on White Street to the town of Danbury for educational purposes

- Western Connecticut State University opens as the Danbury Normal School
- 1904 - Danbury is responsible for almost 24% of the total value of all hats produced in the U.S.
- 1906 - Lee Hat Company is established
- 1908 - Southern New England Telephone Company begins operations in its new building on West Street
- 1910 - German Lutherans dedicate their new church on West Street, formerly the Second Congregational Church
- 1914 - New building of the Concordia society on Crosby Street is dedicated
- Corporal punishment in schools is abolished
- The first wireless apparatus in Danbury is installed in the F. L. Wilson store on Main Street
- 1916 - New post office building on Main Street in Danbury, on site of former passenger station, opens for public inspection
- 1918 - Spanish influenza hits Danbury
- 1919 - As part of downtown street paving, Common Council authorizes installation of ornamental lighting on downtown streets
- The directors of United Hatters adopt a minimum wage scale of one dollar an hour for a forty-four hour work week
- 1920 - The last team of horses in the Danbury Fire Department is replaced by a fire truck
- City recognizes the adoption of national Women's Suffrage by sounding alarms and whistles
- 1921 - Club house of Ridgewood Country Club formally opened
- Danbury Scott Fanton Museum founded
- 1922 - Motor bus service begins between Danbury and Stamford
- 1923 - Six hat manufacturers left in Danbury
- 1924 - Sons of Portugal, first Portuguese fraternal society in the state, established in Danbury
- 1926 - Construction of Lake Candlewood begins
- 1927 - Last 2 large elm trees near the corner of Main and White Streets are removed due to Dutch Elm disease
- The Palace Theater opens seating 2,500, the fifth largest in Connecticut
- 1932 - Danbury Fair held on Sunday for the first time in its history with automobile races as the main attraction
- 15 boys receive diplomas in the first formal graduation exercises of the State Trade School
- 1933 - The first issue of the Danbury News-Times is published
- 1935 - Danbury Music Centre is formed
- 1937 - New water filtration plant at Margerie reservoir begins operation
- Lebanon-American club is established
- 1940 - The first inmates arrive at the Danbury Federal Correctional Institute
- 1942 - The Danbury Historical Museum and Arts Center at 43 Main Street is dedicated
- Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, dancer, and singer Marian Anderson entertain at USO luncheon in Danbury
- 1944 - Success of Danbury's experiment with multiple coin parking meters, attracts inquiries from municipal experts nationwide
- 1946 - John W. Leahy purchases the Danbury Fair from Danbury Agricultural Society. The fair had not been held during wartime
- Students revolt when the tradition of a school holiday for the Danbury Fair is cancelled

- 1947 - A court decision merges the Scott-Fanton Museum with the Danbury Historical Society and the Art Center
- Charles E. Ives awarded Pulitzer Prize for his Symphony No. 3
- The Rose Arbor is dedicated at Rogers Park
- 1953 - Hatters Day Parade
- Ground breaking for new United Jewish Center in November
- 1955 - The Great Flood
- 1957 - Town of Danbury adopts state flood control plan
- 1960 - The area of lower Main Street, above South Street in Danbury, is touted as the "Miracle Mile" for commercial growth
- 1962 - Danbury votes to build a new high school, three elementary schools (Great Plain, Shelter Rock and King Street) and an addition to Morris Street
- 1963 - Five members of Local 22 Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers International construct a replica of a 19th Century one-room school with bricks from the Balmforth Avenue School on the Scott-Fanton Museum property
- 1965 - Consolidation of town and city governments
Termination of Mallory Back Shop by John B. Stetson Company, owner
- Only one hat factory is left in Danbury - Danbury Rough Hat Company, 19 Delay Street
- 1967 - National Art Month is celebrated at the Museum with children's art work from kindergarten to high school, Marjorie Shepard, art director
- 1968 - City residents approved bond issues for a new City Hall, public library, fire headquarters and additional schools
- Plans are announced for a second Western Connecticut State College campus, possible near West Lake Reservoir
- Lee Hat Factory fire
- 1970 - Bombing of the Police Station and Union Saving Bank
- The first edition of the News-Times from the new facility at 333 Main Street is published
- The Museum agrees to sell the Rogers Park site of the Charles Ives Birthplace to the city for a Junior High School (Rogers Park)
- 1976 - Union Carbide announces moving corporate headquarters to Danbury
- 1978 - Danbury becomes a judicial district
- 1981 - Last Danbury Fair held
- 1986 - Danbury Fair Mall opens
- 1987 - Last hat factory in Danbury closes
- 1992 - Grand opening of the Charles Ives Birthplace by the Danbury Scott-Fanton Museum and Historical Society
- 1996 - Danbury Public Library fire

21st Century

- 2006 - Marian Anderson studio opened to the Public at the Danbury Museum