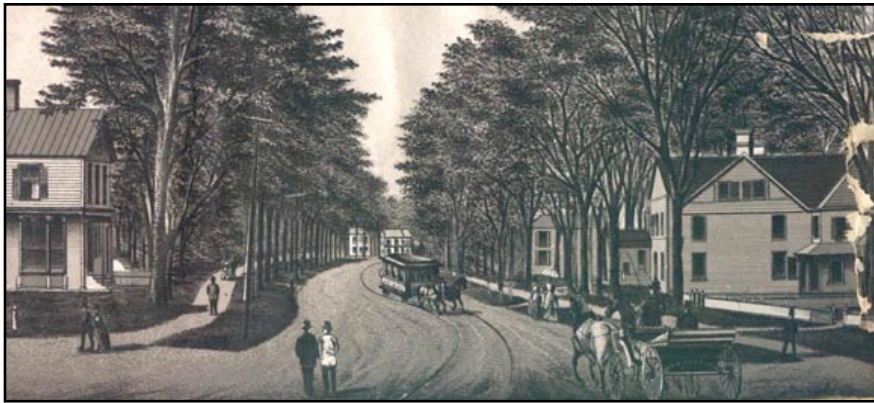


DANBURY TIMES

A Changing Danbury

Danbury becomes a manufacturing town.



Danbury's Main Street.

Danbury began to change after the Revolutionary War. It continued to have farmers, but many people began to produce, or make, goods to sell. They made hats, combs, hoes, harnesses, woolen cloth, tin ware and clocks.

People were making things in their homes to sell. They made boots, shoes, and saddles. Women wove cloth and sold the items they made to merchants in stores.

To make these products, craftsmen needed raw materials. Things like tin, iron, leather, and wool were not found in Danbury. Raw materials had to come from other places. It became necessary to have good transportation to receive and ship goods.

New roads were built and the railroad came to town. This made it possible to sell products to places like New York. As businesses grew, the owners hired more people to help with the work.



Borough of Danbury

Most people lived around Towne Street. There were houses, stores, hat factories, and government buildings. The area became known as a borough.

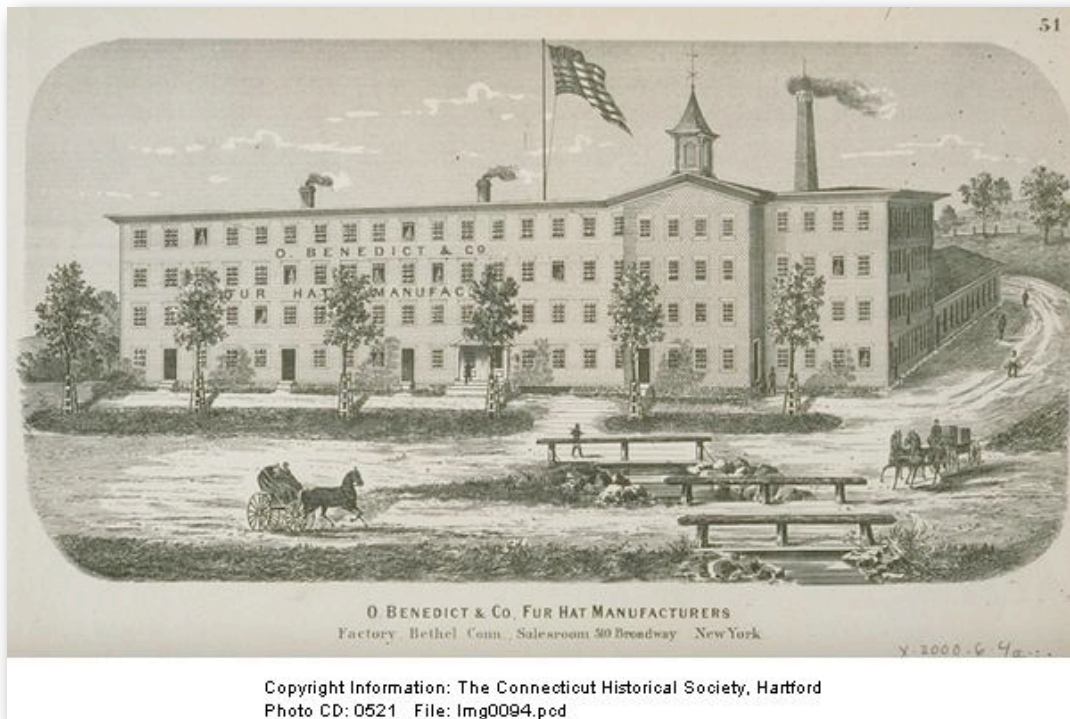
The people who lived in the borough of Danbury were charged taxes. The taxes were used to pay for things such as fire stations and sidewalks.

In 1862, water was piped into homes and businesses. Some of the street names were changed to White Street, Liberty Street, and New Street. Towne Street became Main Street. The borough continued to grow as more people came to live there.

The Rider House

The Rider house was built in 1785. It was part of the rebuilding of Danbury after the Revolutionary War.

Inside the Rider House there is a museum. It has a permanent exhibit that tells the story of Danbury's role in the Revolution and the life of the Rider family from 1785 to about 1830.



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The Hatting Industry

In 1774 about 2,527 people lived in Danbury. Each year, the population grew. People came to Danbury from other countries and other parts of America. They found jobs in the hat factories. By 1850 the population was 5,964.



By 1800 more hats were made in Danbury than any other place in the United States. There were about 56 hat factories or shops in the town. Danbury became known as Hat City.

A lot of water was needed to make hats. Seven reservoirs were created to provide the needed water for the hat factories. Today these reservoirs supply good, clean water for Danbury's families.

Danbury also had several modes of transportation to take the hats to other cities. They had good roads and a new railway system, which made it easy to take the goods to other cities.

Zadoc Benedict

One of the first people to make felt hats in Danbury was Zadoc Benedict.

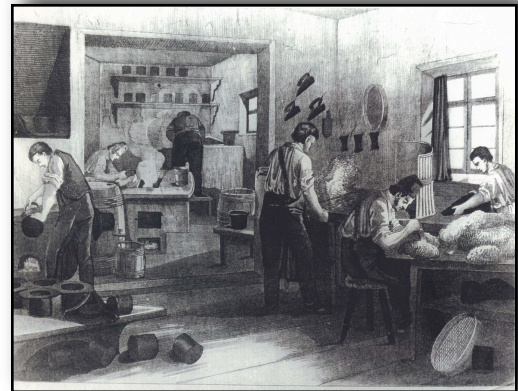
Local folklore says that Zadoc put rabbit fur inside his shoe to cover a hole. After walking around all day, the rabbit fur mixed with his sweat and made felt. However, felting had been around for thousands of years.

Benedict used water and beaver and rabbit fur to make felt. He could make 3 hats each day. He shaped the felt into hats on his bedpost. Hatting started a new industry in Danbury.



Why Wear Hats?

Hats were important to keep your head warm. They were a necessary and popular item of clothing in 1800s and early 1900s. Everyone wore them. The type of hat a person wore said a lot about them and the time in which they were living. You could tell a person's gender, occupation, interests, personality, social status, and the season all by looking at the type of hat worn.



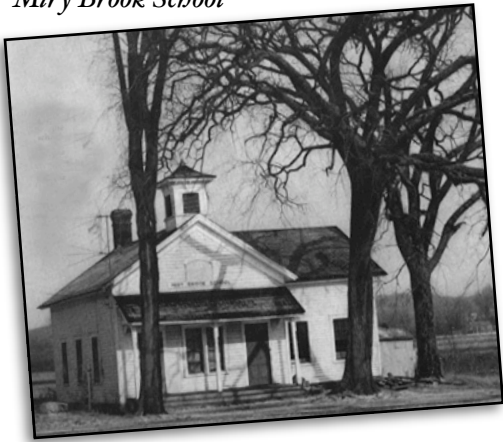
Hat shops started in homes and small buildings.

How to Make a Felt Hat

To make a hat, a hatter would have to wash and clean the fur of an animal. Beaver furs were the most popular fur to use when making a hat because it was the easiest to make into felt. In Danbury, rabbit fur was also used. After the fur was cleaned, different tools would be used to shape the fur. The fur was boiled in water, and shaped until it became felt. The felt was then shaped and steamed into the form of a hat.

To finish the hat, ribbons, buckles, feathers and other trims would be added to the hat. Most of the hats that were made in Danbury would be sent out of the city to other shops to be finished. The hats that were not sent out were finished in the hat shops, and sold in different stores.

Miry Brook School



One Room Schoolhouses

There were many one room public schoolhouses built in the 1800's. Teachers taught students at every grade. Everything was taught in that one room.

The school day was from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Many students walked to school, but if they lived far away they rode a horse or came in a horse-drawn wagon. Students had a 15-minute recess in both the morning and afternoon. There was an hour a day for lunch.

The students were given different responsibilities. Older children had to bring in water and carry in coal or wood for the stove. Younger children had to clean the blackboard, take the erasers outside for dusting and anything else that they were able to do.

In the long winter months the teacher's role was more than just teaching the children. Each schoolhouse had a fireplace at the front of the room to provide heat. Teachers had to get to school early in order to get a fire going in the potbelly stove so that the schoolroom was warm. The teacher would also prepare a hot meal for lunch. This meal was usually a soup or stew of some kind. Teachers also took care of their students, looking out for their health and welfare.

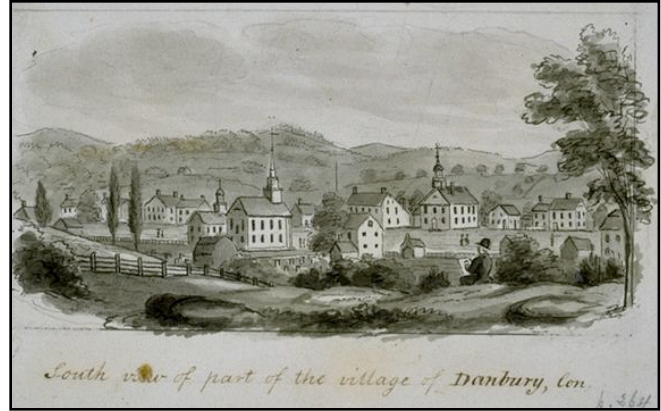


Changing Danburians

Change affected all aspects of life in Danbury. In 1784 Danbury was the center of legal activities in northern Fairfield. The town had a courthouse and a jail.

Industry was changing too. By 1778, an ironworks was built on the Still River. Water-powered mills were used to make flour, linseed oil, and other supplies. Danbury also had a paper-mill. Here, books, almanacs and Danbury's first newspaper, *The Farmer's Journal*, were published.

The population was also changing in this time. By 1850, there were between 200 and 300 immigrants from Ireland and Germany. The population of Danbury was 6,000 in 1850.



Drawing of Danbury by John Warner Barber, circa 1836.

CTHistory Online <http://www.cthistoryonline.org/index.html>

Fire Station

In the 1700's there was no fire department so people used a bucket brigade to fight fires. A bucket brigade was a long line of people who passed buckets filled with water from person to person.

People were worried about fires. They wanted to find ways to prevent and fight fires better. So, in 1824, the town hired a Fire Inspector. His job was to check stoves, pipes, chimneys, and the disposal of ashes from fireplaces and stoves. The town also organized volunteer fire companies in 1829. Danbury had a hook and ladder fire wagon that was pulled by a horse.

In the mid-1800's getting water to fight the fires was a problem. Many people did not live near a water source. Miles of pipe were laid underground to provide water. Fighting fires became easier.



Danbury Fire Station on Ives Street.

Police Department

Danbury has had a police force since at least 1775 when the first court house and jail was built. The current police force was formed in 1889 and their offices were in the basement of the old city hall. There were only nine officers in 1890!

The old city jail is now Danbury's senior citizen center on Main Street.



Works Cited: Photos courtesy of www.picts4learning.com and www.danburyhistorical.org
One Room Schoolhouse http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One-room_school